INTERNAL EVIDENCE;

OR

AN INQUIRY

HOW FAR

TRUTH

AND

THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION

HAVE BEEN CONSULTED

BY

THE AUTHOR OF

THOUGHTS

ON

A PARLIAMENTARY REFORM.

By JOHN CARTWRIGHT, Esq;

As a mad Man who casteth Firebrands, Arrows, and Death;
so is the Man that deceiveth his Neighbour, and saith,
Am I not in Sport? Prov. xxvi. 18, 19.

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PREFACE.

IT was not till the following pages were nearly printed off, that the writer had any thoughts of prefixing to them his name. Indeed there is now a ſort of impropriety in ſo doing, as particular paſſages will ſhew. But the ſubject having inſenſibly drawn from him expreſſions of great freedom in reſpect to political characters and parties, he did not, upon full conſideration, feel ſatisfied with ſheltering himſelf under an anonymous publication of his thoughts.

It is poſſible that licentious wit, and exceſſive piety, may each of them have ſomething to ſay, on the compariſon he has drawn between two characters. His anſwer will be, that no human merit can be ſo properly aſcertained, as by compariſon with the ſtandard to which

which he has referred the merit of the author with whom he has to do; nor any character ſo well explained, as by comparing it with that Character which it is the common duty of us all to imitate. If, therefore, he has made his compariſon without levity or profaneneſs, either in the intention or the mode of ſo doing, he conceives that, in that reſpect, he ſhall ſtand blameleſs.

If it ſhall be objected, that this eſſay contains ſome repetitions of arguments heretofore uſed by himſelf and others; to that remark he ſhall reply, that, had the author he anſwers paid due attention to thoſe arguments, in his opinion they need not have been repeated; and he thought it probable that the very circumſtance of being again ſtated, in anſwer to one who has been much read and much admired, might poſſibly be the means of introducing them to the notice of ſome who had never before taken the trouble of peruſing them. He ſhall alſo beg, that his opponent may come in for a ſhare of that cenſure which falls upon repetitions; ſince he has repeated what has been uniformly ſaid by every apologiſt for parliamentary corruption, from the time of Walpole down to the preſent day. And this plea is the ſtronger, ſince that opponent for the moſt part lays a ſtreſs on arguments, which, even in the preſent controverſy, have been frequently urged, and as frequently refuted. Conſcious of this, and

ſenſible

ſenſible that cloſe argumentation on principles, muſt have compelled him to prove the very reverſe of what he wiſhed to eſtabliſh; and that ſober reaſoning on practical arrangements, muſt have reduced him to an admiſſion of what he aimed to exclude, the author of *Thoughts on a Parliamentary Reform*, vainly endeavouring to give novelty to the ſubject, and as vainly hoping to ſtem the tide of truth and the current of public opinion, has betaken himſelf in this dilemma to the exerciſe of his talents for wit and ridicule, ſuch as they are, as to a laſt reſource. But perhaps it may be thought that he is a little too late for rendering his cauſe any material ſervice by the uſe of even thoſe weapons; being generally, and more prudently employed, before the public have obtained much knowledge of truth, or feel themſelves intereſted in its ſucceſs.

As a farther apology to himſelf, for the repetition of ſome arguments he may have formerly uſed, the writer muſt obſerve, that there is ſo much ſimplicity in the nature of a parliamentary reform, and that the principles on which it abſolutely depends, lie within ſo very ſmall a compaſs, that, in defending them againſt every new attack, come it from whence or in what ſhape it may, we muſt frequently either uſe the ſame arguments that have been uſed with ſucceſs before, or none at all: And it would be as unreaſonable to preclude a man from the

the repeated uſe of the ſame argument in the defence of truth, as of the ſame weapon in defence of his perſon; eſpecially if none other could poſſibly anſwer his purpoſe. It is, however, no ſmall proof of the goodneſs of either a weapon or an argument, that it has been uſed in all ſorts of combats, and to repel every ſpecies of attack, and has never failed.

July 17, 1784.

INTERNAL EVIDENCE:

OR

An Inquiry, &c

FOR my belief, in reſpect to who is the author of the pamphlet mentioned in my title page, unleſs I may be permitted to mention the *internal evidence* of principle, ſentiment and ſtile, on which in a great meaſure I have grounded my faith on this occaſion, I confeſs that I have no other authority than general and uncontradicted report; which I hold to be inſufficient for my adding to that work any name.

In conducting this undertaking, I propoſe to divide my ſubject under three heads of inquiry; delineating, and in the way of parallel, firſt, the character of the Author of the Chriſtian religion, and the character of the author of *Thoughts on a Parliamentary Reform*; ſecondly, the end propoſed to him-

ſelf by each of thoſe authors; and laſtly, the means which each has employed to promote the end in view. Wiſhing to lead men to think, more than to read; and to employ themſelves in profitable action, rather than in frivolous, much leſs in pernicious ſpeculation, I ſhall be ſtudious of all poſſible brevity.

To enter then upon our firſt inquiry, viz. the reſpective characters of the Author of our religion, and of the author of the pamphlet; the former ſtands eminently diſtinguiſhed as a reformer; while the latter has thought fit to diſtinguiſh himſelf as the libeller of reformers and reformation: The former "courted poverty,"* and in a peculiar manner addreſſed his inſtructions to the poor: The latter certainly manifeſts no particular diſpoſition to court poverty, in which he agrees particularly with Mr. Soame Jenyns, author of *A View of the Internal Evidence of the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion*;(1) on the contrary, he ſeems to conſider mere poverty as a juſt cauſe of excluſion from that common right of humanity without which the poor are poor indeed, I mean the right of ſharing in the elections of thoſe who are to make the laws they are to obey, and be tried by; which are to be the protection of themſelves, their wives, their children; and which are to tax and double

(1) "They are offended that modern biſhops ſhould "poſſeſs titles, palaces, revenues and coaches, &c. "Theſe are all but the ſuggeſtions of envy and male-"volence, but no objections to theſe fortunate altera-"tions." P. 150. But poſſibly the temporal power of modern biſhops, as lords of parliament may have given more offence than even their titles and palaces, to ſuch as have not been able to diſcern more political purity, more regard to national peace, or more religious abſtractedneſs from the good things of this world, in theſe than in other men. For the words quoted above and marked * ſee alſo the ſame work. P. 34.

tax

tax the ſhoes on their feet, each article of their humble raiment, the whole labour of their hands, and the very bread they earn by the ſweat of their brows; which laws are alſo to diſpoſe of their time in public duties, and of their very perſons and lives in the public defence; and his diſcourſes, if we may judge by the price of his pamphlet, are in a peculiar manner addreſſed to the rich.——The former, taught nothing but truth and goodneſs; he was all humility, candour, purity, and infantine ſimplicity; while his language, although ſuperior to the moſt elegant claſſic,(2) was at the ſame time adapted to the unimproved capacities of the "peaſant and mechanic:"(3) The latter, ſo far as I can diſcover, teaches neither truth nor goodneſs; as an author he ſeems to be arrogant, diſingenuous, impure, quibbling and artful; while his diction, fluent and tinkling, pert and ſparkling, ſometimes elegant, ſometimes vulgar, ſometimes ſpecious but always deluſive, ſeems upon the whole extremely well ſuited to the end and purpoſe of this performance; in which he is not very ſparing of malicious inſinuation, nor of vulgar, uncharitable and ludicrous deſcriptions of his fellow-creatures, in order to render them objects of contempt and oppreſſion.——The former was a ſage, a prophet, a teacher of righteouſneſs; he chaſtened the heart and purged it of corrupt affections, he illumined the mind and raiſed it to God, he opened to man the gates of eternal bliſs, but only to be approached through paths that could be trod with a conſcience void of offence: the latter ſeems to have no higher ambition than to be thought a court wit, a literary buffoon, a teacher of baſeneſs and profligacy; he attempts to corrupt and harden the heart, to confuſe and darken the mind, and

(2) Jenyns's *Internal Evidence*, &c. P. 36.
(3) Ib. P. 49.

opens to his countrymen no proſpect of national proſperity, nor even a hope of exiſting as a people, except by means to which none but a mind groveling in vices of the meaneſt caſt, or a conſcience ſeared with a hot iron, can poſſibly aſſent.——And laſtly; the former was no reſpecter of perſons, nor a flatterer of human greatneſs or power; but aſſerted the equality of all men, calling equally on every one to judge of, and to exerciſe, the means neceſſary to his own higheſt welfare and eternal ſalvation; he thought none too poor, none too ignorant, none too mean to be made a judge even of heavenly things, or to have what ſo nearly concerned him as his eternal welfare taken out of his own hands; thus vindicating the dignity and the right of man univerſally, and inculcating upon every future legiſlator this important leſſon; 'On the rights of 'individuals, the rights of communities ſtand: 'You cannot be faithful to one, while unfaithful 'to the other: Nor can either the eternal welfare 'of the ſpecies, nor the temporal welfare of com-'munities be promoted, but by a ſacred regard in 'the firſt inſtance to the original, the natural 'rights of individuals, as the grand fundamental 'of all legiſlation, and a principle ſo eſſential to 'public welfare, that its violation will in all caſes 'be productive of evils and misfortunes to the 'community:' The latter tells a partially-elected and ſeptennial parliament, that it is "not worſe," and the king, that he is "a great deal better" than the Engliſh nation deſerves; (p. 26) and, in reſpect to the equality of all men, he has the credit of having written a diſquiſition in expreſs ridicule and contempt of the idea;(4) he alſo, in the pamphlet before us, affects to treat univerſal re-

(4) See *Diſquiſitions on ſeveral ſubjects*, printed for Dodſley, 1782; and *An anſwer to the Diſquiſition on Government and Civil Liberty*, printed for Debrett.

preſentation

preſentation with equal contempt, expreſsly denying the competency of a vaſt majority of mankind in this country to judge of, or to exerciſe, the means neceſſary to their mere civil welfare and political ſalvation; and the whole ſcope and tenour of his preſent work is to favour and to perpetuate the uſurpations of the rich and violent over the poor and injured; thus miniſtering to the tyranny and impiety of inordinate power, and pouring into its liſtening ear this advice. 'Regard not the rights, nor 'care for the welfare of men; poſſeſs yourſelf of 'authority by ſuch means as preſent themſelves, 'and then urge that poſſeſſion itſelf as a plea for 'continuance: no matter for the conſequences to 'individual or to the community; to yourſelf, they 'will be a gratification of your avarice, your pride, 'your ambition, and every luſt of your heart; and 'in ſuch gratifications I would have you to think 'your happineſs conſiſts, and that the nation will 'have no right to complain merely becauſe you do 'not prefer their welfare to your own.'

We come now to the ſecond head of our inquiry; namely, the end propoſed by the Author of the Chriſtian religion, and the end propoſed by the author of *Thoughts on a Parliamentary Reform.*

Here indeed there is an obvious difficulty in our way. Of a divine end, as in the inſtance before us, we may have not only the irreſiſtable evidence of ſuitable means, but likewiſe formal declarations, on the truth of which we may infallibly depend: whereas, in regard to a human end, an infallible dependence on declarations is not to be had; and although the means ſeem ever ſo ſuitable, ſo uniform and conſiſtent, we cannot always be abſolutely certain, that the effect of which they are the neceſſary cauſes, is the very effect and end propoſed by the actor.

Now the end propoſed by the Author of the Chriſtian religion, as not only eſtabliſhed by the irreſiſtable

able evidence of ſuitable means, but by expreſs declarations, of the truth of which we cannot doubt, was, to fulfil that part of the divine will which relates to the union of mankind with his Creator; or, in other words to promote the happineſs of mankind: whereas, the end propoſed by the author of *Thoughts on a Parliamentary Reform*, ſo far as an end can be judged of by the fitneſs, the uniformity, and conſiſtency of the means, ſhould ſeem to be the miſery of mankind. This however is a motive ſo ſtrange and unaccountable that it cannot be admitted without heſitation, nor ſo long as any other can poſſibly be aſſigned. It is certain indeed that he who writes on any ſubject highly important, and, at the moment, particularly intereſting to his country, muſt be actuated by ſome motive or other. A man may write from motives of real patriotiſm (by which I underſtand a principle of affection and duty to one's country) and yet, through the errors of his judgment, may recommend what is pernicious; but as our author defines a real patriot to be, "one who has more honeſty than ſenſe," and in point of ſenſe is himſelf by no means deficient, it would not be acting towards him with either honeſty or candour, to impute to him motives of patriotiſm for having written the pamphlet now under conſideration. And here I cannot but remark the ſingular agreement of ſentiment between our author and Soame Jenyns, Eſq; who has been particularly careful to guard us againſt the ſin of patriotiſm, by informing us that it "directly counteracts the ex-"tenſive benevolence of the Chriſtian religion;"(5) that it "commands us to oppreſs all other countries "to advance the imaginary proſperity of our own; (6) that it is a ſource of "oppreſſion, mean parti-"ality to our country, injuſtice and cruelty;" and

(5) Jenyns's *Internal Evidence*, p. 58.
(6) Ibid. p. 59.

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on theſe accounts he not only diſclaims it himſelf, but totally ſtrikes it out from "the liſt of Chriſtian virtues."(7)

If I forget not, Chriſt wept over the capital of his country, when with the eye of prophecy and benevolence he looked on her approaching overthrow; and Paul I think tells us, that he who provides not for thoſe of his own houſe and his own kindred, is worſe than an infidel. From hence, as well as from the reaſon of the thing, it ſeems natural and juſt to conclude, that our family, our pariſh, our country, are the immediate ſpheres in which, by the limitation of our faculties and the boundedneſs of our powers, Providence has required us to perform in an eſpecial manner the duties of Chriſtianity; for where elſe ſhall we find the neighbour whom we can benefit by our ſervices, unleſs every man were a Newton, a Locke, or a Howard, to ſpread ſcience, reaſon, and benevolence through all regions open to literary intercourſe? And the "friendly aſſiſtance" of ſuch benefactors of the ſpecies as thoſe, being bounded within the narrow limits of civilization and ſcience, it is only in a confined ſenſe that we can apply even to them, the appellation of "citizens of the world,"(8) according to Mr. Jenyns's notion of that character. At the ſame time I ſhould humbly conceive, that the honeſt ploughman, who, in his own family and within his own pariſh, contributes with a truly Chriſtian heart, his mite towards the general ſum of human virtue and human happineſs, is as truly a citizen of the world as the greateſt philoſopher; as in like manner, he is as much a citizen of his own country, as the miniſter of ſtate. Although Pagan patriotiſm, like Pagan piety, were groſsly adulterated with error and vice; ſurely Chriſtian patriot-

(7) Jenyns's *Internal Evidence*, p. 60.
(8) Ibid. p. 58.

iſm,

ſm, animating the citizen to ſtudy and to promote, not only the temporal welfare of his country, but true religion, the virtue and happineſs of his countrymen both here and hereafter, as a duty owing to God and his neighbour, and as contributing towards the ſum of human happineſs, which totally excludes every wiſh to depreſs or injure other nations, is an affection of the moſt benevolent kind, a virtue of the pureſt and moſt exalted nature! To this digreſſion, in anſwer to Mr. Jenyns's objections to patriotiſm, the writer has only to add, that within the narrow ſphere of his own obſervation, he has ever found the trueſt patriotiſm united with the pureſt Chriſtianity; which has taught him to place little dependence on that public ſpirit which has not religion for its baſis and its guide.

But to return to the point from which we digreſſed, and to decide if poſſible what was the end our author propoſed to himſelf on the preſent occaſion, taking into the account the very particular period when his pamphlet made its appearance, we may obſerve that the Houſe of Commons either does, or does not, ſtand in need of a reform: or, in other words, that it either is, or is not, formed according to the conſtitution. Its moral, its political, its commercial, its legal or literary character, is a ſubordinate conſideration; ſince its being virtuous or venal, knowing or ignorant, inclined to principles of freedom or ſlaviſhneſs, are all accidental circumſtances, not perfections or blemiſhes in its inſtitution. Now the conſtitution ſays, that the Houſe of Commons is a repreſentative body. Of whom it ought to be the repreſentative, its name ſufficiently imports, and by the figure in common uſe at this day it is ſtiled, the Commons in Parliament aſſembled. The conſtitution, again, being no reſpector of perſons, no prevaricator, no quibbler, but an oracle of truth and juſtice, declares that 'None ſhall be bound by laws but thoſe who aſſent,

'either

'either perſonally or by their repreſentative.' And that conſtitution knows no more what is meant by virtual repreſentation, as diſtinguiſhed from actual repreſentation, than the chancellor of the Exchequer would know what you meant, were you to talk of virtual taxation, as diſtinguiſhed from real taxation, and tell him it were every bit as good, although it brought him not in a ſingle ſhilling towards his ways and means: or, than a proteſtant knows what a papiſt means, when he talks of the prieſt as the repreſentative, by whoſe prayers, pardons, and indulgencies, inſtead of his own piety and good works, he is to find his way to heaven; and that this virtual religion is all that is fit for the multitude; who are too poor, too ignorant, too ſtupid, to be intruſted with the exerciſe of any real religion. Having ſhewn the conſtitutional principle in reſpect to repreſentation, we are to note, that our conſtitution can only be defined or aſcertained by its principles; for in vain ſhall we attempt to fix its identity, by a reference to the practice of this period or of that; by talking of the revolution, the reſtoration, the Norman or the Saxon æras, or any other epoch, antient or modern. Although therefore, it be certainly true, that repreſentation in this country was never enjoyed to the extent of the above principle; yet it is as certain, that that completeneſs of repreſentation is nevertheleſs the conſtitution. To argue otherwiſe, and to ſet about defining the conſtitution by the preciſe degree of repreſentation enjoyed at one period or at another, were to argue groſsly and abſurdly. What is it that conſtitutes the identity of a man? What principle is that by which you define him, and aſcertain that it is the ſame man who five, or fifty, or five hundred years ago defeated the enemies of his country or propoſed a ſalutary law? Do you, if he be living, refer to his muſcles, his bones, his blood or his limbs; or, if dead, to the ſcattered particles of duſt which once compoſed his body; and main-

tain that they are the ſame muſcles, bones, blood and limbs, or elſe the very particles of duſt, which at the period in queſtion, conſtituted the man you mean? No: for you know they are not the ſame; you know that by accretion and waſte, perpetually operating, his body was never the ſame for two days, two hours, two minutes together, and that his duſt, for aught you know to the contrary, may have conſtituted part of other human bodies ſince his was laid in the grave. Is it not then, the ſoul, the ſpiritual, the conſcious principle, the immortal part, by which alone you can ſtrictly and philoſophically aſcertain his identity? Is it not this principle that is always the ſame, whether the body be healthy or diſeaſed, whole or mutilated, alive or dead, which truly conſtitutes the man, and to which that body was a mere habitation?—Aſſuredly it is. And thus when we treat of repreſentation, or any other political right of men, we muſt be careful to diſtinguiſh accurately between the groſs, varying and periſhable body-politic, and the conſtitution, which is its ſoul and vital principle, unvarying as juſtice, eternal as truth. Nor is it an objection to ſay, that there are governments on earth where no ſuch rights are acknowledged, and where yet there are principles and a conſtitution. I deny the fact. Governments founded in tyranny are againſt all principles, and deſpotiſm has no conſtitution. As ſoon as principles operate, tyranny is no more; as ſoon as a conſtitution is eſtabliſhed, deſpotiſm is at an end. Having therefore proved that univerſal repreſentation is required by the conſtitution of this country, I need not prove that equal repreſentation is ſo alſo; unleſs it be neceſſary to prove that juſtice is not injuſtice. And a few words will prove, that parliaments of a ſingle ſeſſion, and that ſeſſion not exceeding one year, are likewiſe eſſential to the principle of repreſentation in its purity. For if repreſentation be every man's natural right, as ſoon as he

he attains to manhood he muſt enter into poſſeſſion, or he is debarred of his right; and it is a contradiction to admit, that there can any where exiſt a right to deſtroy right. If the community be debarred from electing for ſeven years, perhaps a million towards the end of that period, will have no repreſentation in parliament, and thouſands upon thouſands will have deſcended to the grave, without ever having enjoyed that peculiar bleſſing of the Engliſh conſtitution.(9). The ſame palpable objection,

(9) Ingenious, but not very ingenuous cavillers pretend, that this doctrine of univerſal repreſentation carried to the utmoſt, overturns itſelf by proving too much; for if, ſay they, every man is to enter into poſſeſſion of his right as ſoon as he arrive at manhood, there muſt be daily, inſtead of annual or ſeſſional elections. The anſwer is not very difficult. Men have not a right individually, but collectively, to elect repreſentatives; that is, no individual is to elect a perſon to repreſent him alone, but is to partake only in chooſing a repreſentative for the community or body of which he is a member. Now the ſeveral communities into which the great conſtituent body is diviſible, are likewiſe collectively, and from time to time as occaſions of ſtate may require, to elect a repreſentative body for the whole. This repreſentative body is to be appointed for *a ſpecial purpoſe*, namely, to confer with the crown and the peers on the weighty affairs of the realm *then* requiring conſideration and *diſpatch*; and conſequently requiring the preſence of a parliament. The conſtituent body then in exiſtence electing for *a ſpecial purpoſe*, do, by the very act of election, confer an authority to effect that purpoſe; conſequently, an authority to endure until the affairs are diſpatched which required *the preſence of a parliament*. With the neceſſity of *preſence* is to end the parliament. To deny the competency of the whole ſtate, to confer ſuch authority muſt ſurely be making as extraordinary an uſe of reaſon, as it would be to maintain, that, becauſe a thouſand perſons are this day come of age, ſuch an act of many millions agreed on yeſterday, is not to continue in force until the buſineſs ſhall have been performed.

jection, although in a leſs degree, lies againſt triennial parliaments. Seſſional parliaments are conſequently the only parliaments acknowledged by our conſtitution. If, therefore, the Houſe of Commons be an univerſal and equal repreſentation of the people in parliaments of one ſeſſion, it is according to the conſtitution and ſtands not in need of a reform; but if it be no ſuch thing, it is foreign to the conſtitution, and a reform is neceſſary. And it will be the more neceſſary, in proportion as the departure from the conſtitution has been great, and the ill conſequences thereof have been injurious and alarming. Suffice it at preſent to ſay, that its departure from the true principle of repreſentation is in ſuch an extreme, and the ill conſequences thereof have given ſo great an alarm, that the beſt and wiſeſt men in particular, and the public in general, have called for a reform; and that in the very moment when new repreſentatives had the deſires of their conſtituents freſh on their minds, when rival parties were vieing with each other for the public confidence, and when even faction itſelf

But no ſuch abſurdity is involved in this queſtion; for thoſe who attain to manhood ſubſequent to this act of the ſtate, will actually enter into immediate *poſſeſſion* of their right, and if it were poſſible to diſſolve the parliament ſo elected on the morrow, and to chooſe another the next day, they would then ſhare in the election of a new one. It is alſo to be obſerved that *poſſeſſion* of a right, and the *exerciſe* of a right, are diſtinct things. A man therefore may enter into poſſeſſion in January, without exerciſing his right till June. Now thoſe who become adult after the election of one parliament, cannot poſſibly exerciſe the right of election before there is occaſion to aſſemble another parliament. But ſince, under conſtitutional parliaments choſen once at leaſt in every year, they muſt enjoy even the exerciſe ſometime within the firſt year of manhood, and ſo on once in every ſucceeding year, which is all that any others can do, they would have both poſſeſſion and exerciſe of their right fully and completely.

was

was inliſted in the cauſe of reformation, ſo that the balance of expectation began to turn in favour of ſucceſs; at this very moment, I ſay, our ſingular author publiſhes a ludicrous, malignant, and immoral libel on all reforms and all reformers of parliament without exception; but more particularly levelled at thoſe, who had paid a ſacred regard to the genuine principles of the conſtitution, and whoſe plan of reform is moſt conducive to human virtue, as being moſt conſonant to human liberty. If therefore, an end is to be judged of by the fitneſs, the uniformity and the conſiſtency of the means, this author has given us but too much reaſon to ſuppoſe, that the only end which on this occaſion he could have in view, was human miſery. Immoral however as is the whole tendency of the work before us, I muſt perſuade myſelf that a motive ſo infernal could not have actuated a human being; but that the compoſition has been merely a ſin of ſilly vanity, claſſic pride, and literary buffoonery; proceeding from a mind in which knowledge and ignorance, politeneſs and vulgarity, refinement and groſſneſs, wit and ſtupidity, ſenſe and abſurdity, right and wrong, morality and impiety, religion and profligacy, have been ſtrangely mixed and jumbled together, and floating at random in a perpetual chaos.

How this author, in the work now under conſideration, has performed the duty of "a citizen of the world," or who in any country is to be benefitted by his labours, it is far beyond my capacity to diſcover; and ſince his end or motive, after all our inquiries, ſtill remains a matter of ſome uncertainty, we ſhall drop it here and paſs on to the next diviſion of our ſubject.

UNDER this third and laſt head, we are to conſider the means reſpectively employed by the Author of the Chriſtian Religion, and the author of

Thoughts

Thoughts on a Parliamentary Reform, towards effecting the end which each had in view.

In ſome ſmall degree indeed that which falls under this head of our diſcourſe, has already been anticipated in the diſcuſſion of the firſt inquiry. But having then only ſpoken generally, and ſo far only as ſeemed neceſſary to mark the diſtinctions of character between the two perſons of whom we were ſpeaking, it will now be requiſite to dilate ſomewhat more at large.

The means employed by the Author of Chriſtianity, to promote the end *he* had in view, are in general ſo well known, that I ſhall need only to touch on them very ſuperficially. Added to the proof he gave of his divine miſſion, by the working of miracles, the other means he uſed towards the redemption of mankind and rendering them happy, were certainly the moſt wiſe and effectual that could have been adopted. The firſt obſervation that naturally occurs, is, that he particularly ſhunned an intercourſe with the great, the powerful, and the wealthy; as thoſe whoſe paſſions, prejudices, and imaginary intereſts in ſupporting the corruptions then in being, were moſt likely to ſet them in oppoſition to the truths he had to reveal, and to the reform he had to propoſe. On the contrary, he reſorted to the multitude, or the maſs of the people, in which there was neceſſarily a very great majority of the poorer ſort. It was amongſt them that he principally preached, and he took care to adapt his diſcourſes to their capacities. But as the learned were often amongſt his hearers, he alſo occaſionally addreſſed himſelf to their more cultivated minds. But he always expreſſed himſelf in terms perfectly ſuited to the end he had in view. Of his doctrines it has been well obſerved, that, "Whilſt the moral parts, being of the moſt gene-
"ral uſe, are intelligible to the meaneſt capacities,
"the learned and inquiſitive throughout all ages,
"per-

" perpetually find in them inexhauſtible diſcoveries, " concerning the nature, attributes, and diſpenſa- " tions of providence."(10) Pure, ſimple, benevolent, humble, and yet exalted, he affected no elegance of diction, no claſſical ornaments of ſpeech; much leſs did he make uſe of wit or humour, or any levity unbecoming the gravity and importance of his ſubject, or the god-like end he had in view: but in the ſweet, plain, and forcible language of nature, heavenly truth for ever flowing from his lips, he ſpoke to the underſtandings and the hearts of all men, and they believed. The end he had in view was made manifeſt by the means employed; in order to be happy, he taught men to know God, to love their heavenly Father and their fellow men; and to ſhew this love by rendering honor to one and benefits to the other; and he crowned his divine precepts by an example as divine. He unfolded to man the conſtitution of nature, and taught him his ſtation and his duty; enforcing on all occaſions the neceſſity of ſelf-exertion in every individual human being, as his contribution towards the univerſal virtue and happineſs of the ſpecies, which were the objects of his miſſion.

Whenever reſorted to by the rich or powerful, he unfolded to them the truths of his revelation without other reſpect than he ſhewed to the meaneſt inquirer. He ſoothed not their ambition, pride, or inſolence; nor gloſſed over any of their corruption; much leſs did he encourage their oppreſſions, or give a new edge to the ſpirit of unjuſt domination, by any contemptuous deſcriptions of the poor, and laborious part of the people: No; he taught them, on the contrary, that the poor were their brethren, equal in natural dignity, equal in the rights of humanity, equal in the claims of

(10) Jenyns's *Internal Evidence*. P. 42.

juſtice

juſtice and protection, equal inheritors of ſalvation, and equally valuable in the eyes of God.

The ſublime truths and the heavenly purity of his doctrines, till then unknown to the world(11), were directly calculated to make his diſciples know both God and themſelves, and to guard them againſt pride, preſumption and contempt of others; and to commune with their own hearts, to purge them of every evil diſpoſition, and of every corrupt affection, but above all, of uncharitableneſs, was his conſtant command.

In an eſpecial manner he loved the poor and needy, he pleaded their cauſe, and taught the more fortunate part of the ſpecies to dread the idea of oppreſſion, injuring or even neglecting them. He even loved ſinners, and ſpoke of them with the tendereſt compaſſion. Sometimes indeed, his precepts were mixt with reproof and a holy indignation; but the great, the wealthy and the learned, were generally the objects thereof; for it was principally amongſt them that he met with hardneſs of heart and a diſpoſition to ſhut the mental eye "againſt the ſtrongeſt "rays of truth and religion,"(12) as loving darkneſs rather than light, becauſe their deeds were evil.

Here we might cloſe our obſervations on the means uſed by our Saviour towards promoting the happineſs of mankind, were it not for a very ſingular opinion of that ſingular writer, Mr. Soame Jenyns; who is pleaſed to attribute "that remarkable ſilence, "which the Chriſtian Legiſlator every where pre-"ſerves on civil government, national policy, and "the rights of war and peace," to what he calls "this plain reaſon," namely, "becauſe it would

(11) Jenyns's *Internal Evidence*, p. 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 35, 36, 41, 47, 48, 50, 52, 64, 68, 70, 72, 74, 76, 79, 83, 85, 90, 98, 100, 104, 122, 138, 142, 155, &c.

(12) Ibid. p. 82.

"have

" have been impoſſible to have formed any explicit " regulations concerning them, which muſt not have " been inconſiſtent with the purity of his religion, " or with the practical obſervance of ſuch imperfect " creatures as men ruling over, and contending " with each other :"(13) Of the plainneſs of this reaſon I confeſs I do not feel ſatisfied, ſince I am perſuaded a very different one, and a much plainer may be aſſigned; although I muſt confeſs it will not afford ſo ingenious an apology, or rather ſo complete a juſtification of practices too common amongſt courtiers, ſtateſmen, and ſenators, as well as writers on civil government. I ſhould imagine, then, that the ſilence of Jeſus on the abovementioned ſubjects, as well as on other beneficial arts and ſciences, was ſimply becauſe he was not a teacher of politics, of civil government, of war, commerce, or any ſcience; but of Religion; which was to be an univerſal rule of life to all men, of every rank, claſs, profeſſion, art, ſcience, or occupation whatſoever. Of this grand truth, I cannot think that Chriſtianity is deſtitute of *internal evidence* the moſt complete, were this a time for producing it. If deficient in ſo eſſential a point, if men ruling over men, the whole military claſs, and all perſons concerned in civil government, national policy, the negociations reſpecting peace, the counſels and operations of war, are to plead that it is " inconſiſtent" with their " practical obſervance," the fatal, the horrible conſequences to ſociety and to all practical religion are but too obvious. For my own part I ſhould rather incline to imagine, that the Chriſtian Legiſlator had theſe deſcriptions of men more particularly in his eye, when he laid down this maxim, as ſound and ſubſtantially wiſe in politics as in morals, ' Thou ſhalt not do evil that good may come;' thus cutting up by the roots, all pretences in favour of expediency void of rectitude; and leaving corrup-

(13) Jenyns's *Internal Evidence*, p 62.

tion as well as violence, fraud as well as oppreſſion, without a ſhadow of excuſe or palliation.

We come now at length to review the means which the author of *Thoughts on a Parliamentary Reform* has employed towards effecting the end he had in view, when he ſat down to compoſe that work. Here it will be neceſſary to pay a particular attention to the author's own words. In page 3 he obſerves that "Innumerable have been the ſchemes preſented "to the public by real and pretended patriots, that "is, by thoſe who have more honeſty than ſenſe, "and thoſe who have more ſenſe then honeſty." Whether this brilliant paſſage abound moſt with wit, with logic, moral philoſophy, or chriſtian charity, might be a matter of curious and deep criticiſm, had we time or inclination for the taſk; but at preſent I ſhall only conjecture, that our author, meditating a general and deciſive engagement with the reformers, thought it a part of good generalſhip, to commence the attack with a ſly ſtroke at patriotiſm, to be effected by his diſorderly huzzars and light troops of wit, ſneer and ridicule, which for that purpoſe he puſhed forward, while his main body of argument, and heavy artillery of logic,(14) moved on more ſlowly in order of battle.

Our author ſoon undertaking to enumerate in *a very few ſentences* almoſt *all* the "*innumerable*" ſchemes of reform which have been ſuggeſted, thus proceeds:—"but as very few have agreed in any one "of theſe propoſitions, and *no one* has been able to "form any ſatisfactory plan out of them all, I ſhall," &c. p. 5. Now if our author means, that no one of theſe plans has proved ſatisfactory to himſelf, we may readily aſſent to his propoſition; but if he means to aſſert, that no one of them has given ſatisfaction to wiſe and good men, nor is calculated to remedy the defects

(14) *Ultima ratio regum*, commonly tranſlated, *The logic of kings*, is the motto on all this general's ordnance. It has been ſaid, that Lewis XIV. of France was the firſt who inſcribed it on his artillery.

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in the inſtitution of a modern Houſe of Commons, and thereby to remove parliamentary corruption ſo far as it may be ſuppoſed to affect that houſe, we may very reaſonably doubt the propriety of his aſſertion, or be permitted at leaſt to ſuſpend our aſſent, until he ſhall have overturned the maxims, and fairly refuted the arguments, on which each of thoſe plans is founded. His ability in theſe reſpects we ſhall ſee bye and bye. But even admitting the fact, that no ſatisfactory, by which *I* mean no *adequate* plan, has been yet formed, is it a part of our author's logic to infer, that therefore no ſuch plan can be formed, nor ought to be formed; but that the idea is a ſubject only fit for ridicule? The propriety of reforming, is generally thought to depend on the exiſtence of abuſes; whereas the mode of reforming is a diſtinct conſideration. The mode however muſt always depend upon the ſpecific abuſes to be corrected; and if thoſe are known, the mode cannot be miſunderſtood. Hence plans of reform are not ſo very difficult to invent, as our candid author would inſinuate. That inconſiſtent and inadequate plans of parliamentary reform have been offered to the public, I do not mean to deny. But becauſe ſome men have written without underſtanding the conſtitution, others without regarding it, and ſome again, like Mr. Jenyns in reſpect to Chriſtianity, have contemplated the internal evidence of its truth and perfection, until they have thought it too pure for "practical obſervance," it may not perhaps follow, in the judgment of this nation, that no plan can be formed which ſhould at once preſerve entire every conſtitutional principle, meet and anſwer every juſt and honeſt objection, and remove every difficulty in regard to the dangers we hear of from a raſh or inſidious exerciſe of the royal prerogative. And if theſe principles, theſe objections and theſe difficulties are but known, I ſee no more impracticability in forming an adequate

plan of reform, than I ſee in refitting a ſhip when every leak, every decayed timber, every broken beam and every rotten plank is known to the ſhipwright who undertakes to repair her.

Again:—"of all theſe plans, that of giving a "right of voting univerſally, together with annual "elections, appears," ſays our author, "to be the "moſt uniform, conſiſtent and effectual: it has in-"deed one capital defect, which is, that it is abſo-"lutely and utterly impracticable: but I do not "mention this as an objection, ſo far from it, that "I think it is its chief excellence, and is what indu-"ces me to prefer it to all the reſt." p. 5. Now as I do not think it incumbent on me to anſwer wit with wit, and perhaps might fail were I to attempt it, I ſhall here content myſelf with noticing only our author's diſpoſition of mind and capacity of judging, in reſpect to a reform, which has employed the thoughts and excited the anxieties of men not deficient in knowledge, genius or virtue. In a voluptuous age, which has beheld nothing better than a moſt extravagant monopoly and partiality of repreſentation in the Houſe of Commons and parliaments of ſeven year's continuance, a plan ſo ſimple, ſo pure, ſo perfectly congenial with the common rights of humanity; equally favouring, protecting and embracing high and low, rich and poor, the poſſeſſor of land and the follower of commerce; without partiality, favour or affection; and injurious to no one human being; a plan, I ſay, ſuch as this, muſt needs for a while be an object of alarm, averſion, oppoſition, ridicule and abuſe, to the chief prieſts and elders, the ſcribes and phariſees of the times. By thoſe who framed it, all theſe things were foreſeen; but it was foreſeen alſo, that, by means of the eternal principles of truth, juſtice and ſound policy on which its foundations are laid, it would, and muſt, in due time prevail. Like that univerſal, ſimple, pure and perfect plan of religious reform,

reform, which "to the Jews was a ſtumbling "block, and to the Greeks fooliſhneſs," it had, on one hand, to encounter the groſs conceptions, the pride, ambition, and ſelfiſh intereſts of the corrupt and powerful; and, on the other hand, to reſiſt the keen attacks of the learned. That unto our author in particular, whoſe *Attic* ſalt ſhews how much he reſembles "the Greeks," thoſe celebrated teachers of "vain philoſophy," this plan ſhould appear "fooliſhneſs," may poſſibly by ſober minded men be conſidered as an *internal evidence* of its truth and excellence; but, be that as it may, I ſhall venture to expreſs a doubt, whether, with all his wit and all his learning, he will be able to defend the old corruptions againſt even "the "meaneſt and moſt illiterate" preachers of the new doctrine.(15)

Again: P. 8. "Nor would it," ſays he, "be "*poſſible* to carry on, or ever to conclude elections, "in which the voters are ſo innumerable, and con-"ſequently ſo unknown."——"And if theſe "elections were annual, one *could not be* finiſhed "before the other began." P. 9. But rapidly as our author thus diſpatches matters, overturning elaborate plans and ſilencing volumes of argument by his modeſt *ipſe dixit*, we may I hope without offence be juſt permitted to obſerve, that his firſt impoſſibility, and yet more, is really practiſed in many of our elections at this day; ſince ſome of our elective bodies are twice, thrice and four times as numerous, as any of them could be under the ſeveral plans of the Duke of Richmond, Major Cartwright, or the Weſtminſter Sub-committee. And his ſecond impoſſibility was the well-known practice of our anceſtors for many hundred years. Nay, they ſometimes improved very conſiderably upon this impoſſibility, by electing *new* parliaments

(15) Jenyns's *Internal Evidence*. P. 104.

twice,

twice, thrice, and even four times in a year; as the writs ſtill exiſting demonſtrate.(16)

So much for our author's impoſſibilities; but, ſays that admirable writer to whom I am already ſo much indebted for illuſtrations of my imperfect arguments, "we have power over the mind's eye, "as well as over the body's, to ſhut it againſt the "ſtrongeſt rays of truth and religion."(17) Nay, in truth, when determined not to ſee, we can even knock our heads againſt matter of fact, and yet keep our eyes as cloſe as ever.

None of the elective diſtricts propoſed in the plans abovementioned would contain more than 2500 or 2600 electors, whereas we now have elective bodies of 4, 5, 10, and 15,000; and, not to mention other elections where four and five thouſand perſons have polled in a day, above 2000 were polled in the courſe of ſix hours in the very election at this moment undecided in the city of Weſtminſter. (18) But, for the more certain diſpatch in this reſpect, it is particularly provided in theſe plans, that, by proper ſubdiviſions of each diſtrict and ſeperate polls, every election ſhall be finally cloſed within a ſingle day; the limitation in his Grace of Richmond's bill in particular, is ten hours. Then again, in order to render theſe elections deciſive, Major Cartwright's bill provides, that the annual election-day ſhall be early enough in the ſummer, for having all diſputes carried to the approaching aſſize, and there finally determined long before the meeting of parliament, by a jury of the county, but which jury ſhall none of them be inhabitants of the particular diſtrict whoſe election is queſtioned. When it is recollected that ninety-nine in a hundred of election diſputes turn upon the

(16) See Prynne's Brev. Parl. Rediv.
(17) Jenyns's *Internal Evidence*. P. 82.
(18) April 5th.

almoſt

almoſt *innumerable* qualifications now in uſe (if I may be permitted to adopt our author's favourite epithet,) all which, by univerſality of repreſentation, would be reduced to two, viz. the age, and the reſidence of the elector; and when we duly conſider alſo all the other tendencies of theſe plans to counteract every attempt at impoſition, it may perhaps be admitted that, under ſuch a reform, a diſputed election will moſt probably be a very rare occurrence; and poſſibly likewiſe it may be thought, that judges and juries, would be as competent to give a final deciſion in caſe of an appeal to them, as any committee of fifteen members of the Houſe of Commons can be. Some will alſo be of opinion, that a national repreſentative and legiſlator was never by the conſtitution intended to be converted into the amphibious characters of judge and juror in the ſame cauſe; nor the Houſe of Commons to be a judicature for determining mere points of law. More need not be ſaid, to prove that our very confident and deciſive author is either not very well informed on the ſubject he is pleaſed to handle, or that he has taken the liberty to ſuppreſs the evidence of which he was poſſeſſed. He is welcome to chooſe his alternative. To have ſuppoſed him incapable of contriving himſelf practicable arrangements for performing either of his impoſſibilities, would not I fear have highly gratified his vanity, nor indeed have been paying any great compliment to that acuteneſs of intellect for which he is ſo much admired in the circles of politeneſs.

Critics have uſually made diſtinctions between argument and declamation, and ſometimes perhaps too curiouſly. How they would decide upon the following paſſage of our author, as intended to *prove* and *demonſtrate* the impracticability of univerſal ſuffrage, it is not for me to ſay. "Let us but figure "to ourſelves, multitudes of all deſcriptions and "denominations called out to exerciſe their right of voting,

"voting, inflamed by conteſt, intoxicated with "liquor; labourers and manufacturers of every "kind, above and under ground; weavers from "their looms, and miners from tinneries and coal-"pits; ſailors from their ſhips, and ſoldiers from "their quarters; to whom we muſt add, thouſands "of thieves, ſmugglers, rogues, vagabonds and "vagrants: I ſay, let us figure to ourſelves all "theſe reſpectable electors *let looſe* in one day "throughout every part of the kingdom, and ſuch "a ſcene of confuſion, of drunkenneſs and riot, of "rapine, murder and conflagration, will preſent "itſelf, as muſt ſhock us with horror even in ima-"gination." p. 7. This, for aught I know, may be a very well painted picture; its *deſign* may be excellent, its drawing bold and expreſſive, and its colouring brilliant; but yet "it has indeed one "capital defect, which is, that it is abſolutely and "utterly" unlike any thing that could happen, under any of the plans for "giving a right of voting "univerſally, together with annual elections," (p. 5) as formed by Mr. Cartwright, the Duke of Richmond or the Weſtminſter Sub-committee. In the ſame ſtile and from the ſame ſchool, the public will remember a once-admired picture of our militia *before its exiſtence*, by the political pencil of Mr. Soame Jenyns, which was exhibited at Mr. Dodſley's in the year 1757. It had all the ſame kinds of merit which diſtinguiſh this work of our author's imagination, and had its admirers until the original unfortunately appeared. From that moment, it loſt all eſtimation; the deſign was thought infamous; the drawing, malignant and contemptible caracature; and the colouring, as overcharged and unnatural as the crimſon cheek of a painted harlot.

But, not to imitate our ſlippery author, who dreads nothing ſo much as grappling with his adverſary in cloſe fight, let us approach him a little more nearly

nearly, and try his ſtrength. One of his fears, it ſeems, is that of all the labouring part of the community, together with the vicious and idle, being "let looſe" *one day in every year*. Now I want to know, if all theſe people are not now, in the preſent ſtate of things, "let looſe" *fifty-two days in the Year?* And if Sunday be always a day to be dreaded, merely becauſe the labouring part of the people are not *bound* at home by their uſual employments? I would likewiſe aſk; If no man be called from his own pariſh in the country, nor beyond the next ſtreet in town, where will be the confuſion of an election? If no ſtrong drink is to be had, where will be the drunkenneſs? If no point can be carried by raiſing a tumult in any *one* country pariſh, nor in any *one* ſubdiviſion of a city, whence will come the riots? If no qualifications but age and parochial reſidence, *previouſly* inrolled, are to be required, if the electors are to be divided and ſeparated as above, and if all elections are to be completed in one day; where will be the ground for diſputing elections, the means of ſpinning out a conteſt, the temptation to diſorder, or the time for inflaming and bringing together the various unconnected voters of a diſtrict, or for practiſing any iniquitous manœuvre? And, finally, if ſeats in parliament can no longer be ſold for "power, honors, and preferments;" (p. 23) but ſhall become offices of labour, with no higher emolument at moſt than reaſonable wages from the conſtituents, whence, I pray, are to come all this "rapine, murder and conflagration," with which our author has ſo highly inflamed his imagination and filled his ſoul with ſo much horror? Were it not out of pure reſpect for the company I am in, this anticipation of a panic fright, at ſpectres that never can appear, might tempt me to ſmile. But I would not willingly be guilty of an indecorum. I will therefore uſe my beſt endeavours to keep my countenance; and with our author's leave, I muſt

obſerve that diſorder and miſchief, are ideas totally diſtinct from the idea of election; and can only be brought into connection with it by foreign circumſtances, either in fact or "in imagination." Thoſe circumſtances are generally feaſting, bribery, and hiring of banditti to ſubſtitute compulſion, *inſtead* of election. Now men capable of theſe baſe arts and iniquities, do not practice them for nothing; they do not pay down their thouſands, they do not riſk the penalties of the law, they do not even act the ſpendthrift in ſin, merely for the ſake of ſo doing. When their votes and their ſpeeches in a Houſe of Commons, ſhall no longer be ready money for the purchaſe of emoluments, titles or power, to themſelves or their kindred; their tricks, and inſolencies, their fawning, lying and bribing at our elections, will inſtantly be at an end. Take away a cauſe, ſay all philoſophers, and the effect will ceaſe. The cauſe of parliamentary corruption will be removed, when neither miniſters nor factions ſhall find it practicable to purchaſe the members. And this impracticability will be the neceſſary effect of elections ſuch as I have deſcribed, and ſuch as our virtuous author attempts to ridicule. By means of ſuch elections, the member, as I have ſhewn, would be placed out of the reach of temptation; and then, it will readily be granted, that the miniſter would be a driveller, who ſhould any longer dream of corruption as a neceſſary engine of government. But all theſe arguments on which I have touched thus ſlightly, together with others of great weight and extent, have been very fully and very ably urged by the advocates for reform. For what reaſon our author has thought fit to paſs them by, unnoticed and unanſwered, it is for him to explain, and to reconcile with the principles of candour and common honeſty; as well as with the duty of a citizen

to

to his country, if, in his opinion, any ſuch duty ſubſiſts.

In controverſies on important ſubjects, and ſurely a ſubject which involves in it the purity or corruption of the legiſlature, the proſperity or ruin of the ſtate, muſt be conſidered as important,—in ſuch controverſies, I ſay, it is uſually expected of the literary combatants, that they aſſume nothing as undeniable, which has been reaſonably queſtioned, without firſt removing the objections and eſtabliſhing their premiſes; much leſs, are they at liberty, in the very teeth of concluſive argumentation, to make ſuch aſſumptions. Our author aware, I ſuppoſe, of theſe laws of controverſy, will perhaps tell us that he is no combatant in this cauſe, on the ſubject of which, in his opinion, it would be ridiculous to be ſerious: and, on that account, he may plead privilege as a pantomimic wit, whoſe office it is to be merry whether in ſeaſon or out of ſeaſon, and whether he make his ſubject or himſelf the moſt an object of our ridicule and contempt. How far we ſhall admit his plea of privilege, may be matter for conſideration; but we cannot heſitate to acknowledge his judgment, in rather chooſing to act the political Pero or Punchinello on this occaſion, and play off his buffooneries to make ſilly people laugh; than to have undertaken for their amuſement, a ſerious game at fiſticuffs with thoſe noted and unmerciful bruiſers, truth, fact, and demonſtration.

I have already obſerved that the Author of the chriſtian religion ſoothed not the pride, ambition and inſolence of the rich and powerful; nor encouraged them in their oppreſſions, by giving a new edge to thoſe vicious paſſions which inſpired them with contempt for the poor, and with a ſpirit of unjuſt domination. How far the author of *Thoughts on a Parliamentary Reform* hath been diſpoſed to imitate this amiable conduct, may be ſeen in the

following paſſage. "Another reaſon," ſays he, "which perſuades me that this ſcheme is impracticable, is, that I cannot foreſee any claſs of "men whoſe intereſt or inclination would not "induce them to oppoſe it: the landed gentlemen "*would not much approve*, that every pauper, gypſy, "vagrant, and leaſt of all every poacher, ſhould "enjoy as great a ſhare in the legiſlature as himſelf; the city of London *will never conſent* that "every drayman, hackney-coachman, and chimney-ſweeper, ſhould be veſted with as good a "vote as the lord-mayor and aldermen, nor the "livery *be deſirous* of admitting ſo numerous an "addition to their reſpectable fraternity: the corporations throughout the kingdom, *will never* "*ſubmit* to have their conſequence annihilated by a "participation of their privileges with ſo innumerable a multitude; nor do I think that very "multitude, or *the people at large*, would be extremely zealous to ſupport it: at firſt indeed "when *they* are told," &c. As indirect inſtruction has generally been found moſt perſuaſive, I ſhall readily give the author all the credit he wiſhes, for the addreſs he has ſhewn in arming the prejudices of all ranks againſt the common, equal rights of the people and the liberties of his country. He has very ſkilfully taken the right means to alarm the pride, to awaken the ſelf-intereſt, and to ſtimulate the unjuſt and monopolizing ſpirit, of all who at preſent engroſs to themſelves the election of our Houſe of Commons. This paſſage alone might ſecure the writer from any apprehenſions of being taken for one of "thoſe who have more honeſty "than ſenſe," namely, a real patriot: (p. 3) I wiſh however the *internal evidence* it affords againſt his patriotiſm; was not equally deciſive againſt his having been governed, in the writing of it, by a ſpirit of chriſtianity, which "enjoins us "to imitate the univerſal benevolence of our Crea-

Creator."(23) It may however be a kindneſs to inform the gentleman, that in the city of London, the doctrine of univerſal and equal repreſentation has been as favourably received, and perhaps more favourably, than in any other part of the kingdom. Nor will he, upon his own principles of reaſoning, be ſurprized at this, when he conſiders that it is her *intereſt* to promote it; becauſe on no other ground can ſhe pretend to that ſhare in the general repreſentation in the Houſe of Commons, to which ſhe is entitled by her population, and which ſhe is now ſo far denied, as to be put only on a level with the petty borough of Weymouth cum Melcombe Regis. But after all, politicians have no warrant that I know of, from either religion or morality, to addreſs their reaſonings to the mere *intereſts* of men, without regard to their conſciences, or to truth, juſtice and benevolence. If, in ſupport of *theſe principles*, they can ſhow that it is for the intereſts of men to receive their advice, an appeal to thoſe intereſts is then judicious, and agreeable to the practice of both Chriſt and the Apoſtles. An appeal however to ſuch intereſts *againſt* the cauſe of truth, juſtice and chriſtianity, will not be found very reconcileable with any ſyſtem of morality that has yet been preſented to the world. And if our author means to refer to the preſent ſtate and practice of repreſentation, as to an authority that ought to have its weight in laying to ſleep the preſent queſtion, I ſhall beg Mr. Soame Jenyns to give him an anſwer. "Univerſal practice cannot alter the "nature of things, nor univerſal error change the "nature of truth."(20)

Having now diſmiſſed our author's hint to the *freeholder*, the *city and corporation elector*, let us examine his hint to the *non-elector*, whom the advocates for univerſal repreſentation invite to the exerciſe of

(23) Jenyns's *Internal Evidence*, p. 59.
(20) Ibid. p. 66.

what

what they conſider, not only as a common right, but as arms of defence, by which the conſtitution will be moſt effectually preſerved. "At firſt in-deed" ſays he, "when they are told, that they "ſhall all be legiſlators," &c. "they will perhaps "be a little elated and delighted with their new ac-"quiſition; but when they are *better informed*, and "underſtand, that the intent of his ſcheme is TO "PREVENT ALL BRIBERY AND CORRUPTION, AND "WILL PRECLUDE THEM FROM RECEIVING ONE SHIL-"LING OR ONE DRAM OF GIN FOR THEIR VOTES, they "will reject this uſeleſs donation with contempt; "and there will not be a tinker, who will not chooſe "rather to mend a kettle for ſix-pence, than the "conſtitution for nothing; nor a labourer, who "will not make faggots rather than laws; nor a "pickpocket, who will not prefer the exerciſe of "his profeſſion at an election to giving his vote." p. 12. Our chriſtian author—for I dare not call him patriotic, ſince Mr. Jenyns tells us, patriotiſm is a vice; and ſince we are now informed, that a patriot is a man with leſs ſenſe than honeſty—our chriſtian author, I ſay, here uſes his chaſte and generous eloquence as artfully as the caſe will admit, to ſhew the lower orders of people that the offered gift is not worth their acceptance nor concern. But in the very ſtatement of the caſe, he has not been wholly able to conceal the natural and obvious tendency of the plan to produce the effects propoſed by it, viz. "to prevent all bribery and "corruption" at elections. I have little to ſay to the motive for thus teaching what a cynical perſon might call doctrines of baſeneſs and profligacy: but I cannot omit to obſerve, that the body of *non-electors*, make ſix parts in ſeven, or five parts in ſix at leaſt, of the whole community, or about *ſix millions of the people*; the impreſſion of which fact is ſo ſtrong upon the mind of our author, that without adverting to the impropriety of the phraſe, he even calls them "the people at large;" nor can I help likewiſe

wiſe remarking, that, in his candid and charitable deſcription of them, he has not made the ſmalleſt diſtinction in favour of perſons of property, of education, of character and virtue, of which a great proportion of the body may reaſonably be thought to conſiſt, but has painted *the whole* in colours of ſuch groſs and ſhocking depravity, as to be ſubject to influence for the ſake of "a ſhilling or a dram of "gin." Can this be the mere wantonneſs of a licentious imagination; or does it proceed from that malice and meanneſs, which is ever at the bottom of the heart, in a genuine buffoon? It cannot fail however to excite the indignation of every virtuous man, and convince him for what *end* the book before us has been written.

That human beings ſo depraved and abandoned as this author has deſcribed, are to be found in the community, is but too true. That ſuch perſons may ſet little value on a right which they cannot exerciſe for ſome baſe or immoral purpoſe, may alſo be true. But, what then? Is this an argument for depriving ſix millions of the people of this right; a right which belongs to them as men; a right which conſtitutes their political defence againſt oppreſſion? Our author might as well reaſon againſt the ignorant and profligate, the neceſſitous and venal, being allowed to go to church, becauſe one would rather go to the gin ſhop, or another would rather pick pockets at the church door; and who for theſe reaſons would "reject this uſeleſs donation with con-"tempt." But if it be certain that the elective right will by ſuch perſons be eſteemed of ſo little value, I ſhould conceive the worſt we have to fear, is, that they would then keep away not only from church, but from the elections alſo, leaving the public duties both to God and their country, to be performed by the ſober and orderly part of the community.

"But,

"But" proceeds our author(p. 13.) "was this "ſcheme of univerſal repreſentation, or *any other* of "the propoſed plans of reformation practicable, and "purſued, *certain I am*, that they would not *in the* "*leaſt* contribute to the great end, which is the "formation of an independent parliament."—How modeſt! "becauſe" continues he, "REASON does "not perſuade me, that electors the moſt *ignorant* "and *profligate*, the moſt *neceſſitous* and *venal*, would "return members more incorrupt than the preſent; "nor does EXPERIENCE teach me, that ten or twenty "conſtituents would chooſe repreſentatives leſs able "or honeſt than ten or twenty thouſand." "I am "firmly convinced, both by reaſon and long expe- "rience, that *no alteration in the mode of election*, or "in the electors themſelves, would produce any "change in the elected." Here, with the reader's permiſſion, after once more noticing the indiſcriminate application of the epithets, "ignorant and "profligate, neceſſitous and venal," to the whole elective body without exception, I muſt make a digreſſion upon the ſubject of REASON, to which our author now makes his appeal; and, with *his* permiſſion, I will do it in the words of Soame Jenyns, Eſq; Speaking of REASON, he ſays, "There is "then no abſurdity ſo extravagant, which ſhe is not "ready to adopt: ſhe has perſuaded ſome, that "there is no God; others, that there can be no "future ſtate: ſhe has taught ſome, that there is "no difference between vice and virtue, and that "to cut a man's throat and to relieve his neceſſities "are actions equally meritorious: ſhe has convin- "ced many that they have no free-will in oppoſition "to their own EXPERIENCE; ſome that there can be "no ſuch thing as ſoul, or ſpirit, contrary to their "own perceptions; and others, no ſuch thing as "matter or body, in contradiction to their ſenſes. "By analyzing all things ſhe can ſhew, that there "is nothing in any thing; by perpetual ſifting ſhe

"can

" can reduce all exiſtence to the inviſible duſt " of ſcepticiſm; and by recurring to firſt princi- " ples, prove to the ſatisfaction of her followers, " that there are no principles at all."

Amongſt the reſt of her wonders, it ſeems, ſhe has perſuaded our author to believe, that the election of a Britiſh parliament is as ſafe in the hands of a ſixth part of the community, as of the whole: and that a majority of that parliament ought to continue to be elected by a body of men not equal in number to the electors of the ſingle city of Weſtminſter. Nay, ſhe has ſatisfied him that a member of the Houſe of Commons who buys his ſeat of " ten or twenty" electors in a petty borough, and holds that ſeat for *ſeven* years, barring the mere accident of an earlier diſſolution, is juſt as likely to ſtudy the public intereſt, and to act with fidelity to his country, as he who ſhould owe that ſeat to a real popular election without bribery, and ſhould hold it only for one ſeſſion. She has even " *firmly* con- " vinced him that no alteration in the mode of elec- " tion" at Old Sarum, or the other burgage tenures; at the Admiralty, Ordnance or Treaſury boroughs, " would produce any change in the" (parliamentary conduct of the) " elected." (p. 14) She has alſo convinced him, no doubt, that the power of a maſter to change his ſervant, or of a merchant his clerk, or a client his attorney, as often as he ſees occaſion, has no effect whatever towards keeping ſervants, clerks and attornies honeſt: and that it " would " not produce any change" if, having once taken a ſervant, a clerk, or an attorney, we were compellable to employ him for ſeven years, and to leave our purſe in his keeping to diſpoſe of at his pleaſure.

Nay, ſhe ſeems equally to have convinced him, that folly and falſhood, are more laudable than wiſdom and truth; miſrepreſentation and calumny, more reputable than candour and fair report; and to miſlead and deſtroy, is more benevolent than to enlighten and preſerve. Nor is this all; for we

ſhall find anon, more wonders of her performing, and amongſt the reſt, that ſhe makes our author believe independence is dependence; and corruption, purity; ſince it is that which diſpoſes members of parliament to ſupport "meaſures of public utility" with ſteadineſs and ſucceſs. P. 20, 21.

And here we may obſerve the difference between a political reformer and a wit. The reformer, in laying down his ſyſtem, thinks it abſolutely neceſſary to build it on the foundations of juſtice; to fortify it at every point with ſimplicity, convenience, ſound policy, and happy effects; and to defend it with the batteries of honeſty and truth: the wit, who profeſſes to demoliſh this ſyſtem, makes proclamation of his intent by ſound of trumpet, and marches forth in gallant array; but ſo far from approaching near enough to ſhake a foundation, or ſilence a ſingle gun, he is content to ſhew himſelf before the outworks, which, to ſpeak in phraſe military, he *inſults* by ſome ridiculous bravado, and opens his rattling but harmleſs batteries of ludicrous deſcription, humorous caracature, witty declamation, and frothy argument; which ſoon make ſuch a noiſe and ſuch a ſmoke, that, neither hearing nor ſeeing his adverſary any more, he concludes that he has totally annihilated him and his ſyſtem together. With the happieſt complacency, he then files off to his admiring friends, and modeſtly announces his triumph, with a VENI, VIDI, VICI!—while yet the ſyſtem remains juſt where it was, untouched by a ſingle ſhot.——Whether ſuch an eſcape has already been the good fortune of our wit's own batteries, and what will be their fate in the end, the reader is to decide.

One of his arguments to prove that "no alteration in the mode of election, would produce any "change in the elected," we rather conceive that we *have* ſilenced. Proceed we then to what follows. In p. 15, he tells us that, chooſe our members as we will, "the parliament, when aſſembled,

"*will*

" *will be juſt the ſame.*" This indeed is only repeating in other words, what he had ſaid before; and he again expreſſes the ſame ſentiment, in another form of words, in the very next page; to which he immediately adds " if their ſituations differ, their " proceedings will differ with them." Now this I take to be a direct contradiction of himſelf, and is preciſely what the reformers mean to bring about and eſtabliſh. Place the very men who have conſtituted a negligent, an inſolent, or even an unfaithful parliament, in a different ſituation from that which tempted them into negligence, inſolence, or unfaithfulneſs, and then we know " their proceedings will differ with their ſituation." By conceding this point, our author has turned his own flank, and he muſt be a wretched general who cannot now put him to the rout. Let but repreſentatives really owe their elections to the people, and all means of bribery be done away, by having *every elective body numerous*, and *the period of authority ſhort*, and it will moſt aſſuredly produce an effectual change in " *their ſituation.*" Each member then repreſenting one of the diſtricts into which the whole country will be divided, will have all the local intereſts of that diſtrict to protect and advance, and his continuance in the honourable ſtation from year to year, depending wholly upon his vigilance, care and ability in diſcharging the truſt committed to him, it is obvious what a general change muſt be wrought upon the Houſe of Commons, by ſuch a change in the ſituation of each individual member. The conſequences need not be predicted; but in order to ſatisfy our author, we may ſafely affirm that ſuch a repreſentative body, upon the principles of his own reaſoning, will " ſeldom, very ſeldom," betray or neglect the intereſt of their conſtituents, " becauſe their own will be immediately included in it." p. 16. But, ſhould you again " *remove the danger*" of their conſtituents' diſpleaſure, by reſtoring the monopoly of petty boroughs and ſeptennial elections, they would again be " influenced by the

"views of intereſt and ambition, they would ſplit "into factions and parties, and liſt under contend- "ing leaders," p. 17. as our author will admit they have ever done, *in the ſame circumſtances*, through the whole courſe of his "long experience."

Methinks our author, amidſt the noiſe and ſmoke he has raiſed, has not only turned his own flank and expoſed himſelf to defeat; but has actually got into ſuch confuſion as to have turned all his own batteries on himſelf, and left little more for his adverſary to do, but to look on and ſee him ſelf-defeated. For in p. 17, he ſays, "Their corruption "will always increaſe in proportion to their power, "becauſe they have more to ſell and are more neceſ- "ſary to be bought." Nay, this is ſetting fire to his own magazine, and blowing up all his works at a blaſt. No adverſary could have wiſhed him to have more flatly contradicted all he has been advancing in the three foregoing pages. What is the object of a parliamentary reform, but to change the "ſituation" of the members of the Houſe of Commons from being for the moſt part independent of true popular election, and poſſeſſing power of long duration, to the contrary; and from being collectively the abſolute lords and maſters of the nation, (and the king too by their good will,) to that of being their attornies and agents, for exerciſing repreſentatively the people's ſhare in the legiſlature, and being held to their good behaviour, by a conſciouſneſs of not being able to abuſe their power with impunity? As their power for a century paſt has exceeded all wholeſome bounds, ſo has their corruption extended beyond decency or endurance. When their power ſhall not be original, but truly delegated; not from themſelves, but from the people; not for ſeven years, but for one; not renewable at a price, but by preſerving the eſteem of their conſtituents; then will they have the true, the wholeſome, the operative power of a parliament; but not that power which produces the infamous com-

commerce of corruption between parliaments and miniſters. If it have been from poſſeſſing this improper power, that they have heretofore been bought; and in proportion to the increaſe of that power, that their corruption increaſed; it will of courſe *de*creaſe with the diminution of this power; and if we leave too little to be worth buying, they will not be bought at all. This reaſoning being agreeable to the laws of nature, and *the experience of mankind*, how much ſoever it may differ from the peculiar mode of reaſoning of our author, we certainly ſhall not be obliged, in order to obtain independent parliaments, to "make *men*, as well as members," p. 17. for ſuch as we find ready made to our hands will very well anſwer the purpoſe. Had we taken for granted our author's aſſertion, p. 14. that "no alteration in the mode of election would pro-"duce any change in the elected," we ſhould have found that it proved rather too much; for what is it but ſaying, that no new laws can ſupply the defects of old ones in reſtraining the particular vices of men, and putting an end to practices in which they have been accuſtomed to indulge themſelves to the prejudice of the public? If this be found reaſoning, I would adviſe the miniſter to think no more of contriving reſtraints for the ſmugglers, or the ſervants of the India Company; ſince our author will tell him it can anſwer no purpoſe, "they "will be juſt the ſame;" p. 15. "in *them* lies the "ſource of the evil, which no *external* application "can approach." p. 14. The only expedient left us in this caſe, when all legiſlation ſhall become nugatory, will be to employ our author and all the other eloquent writers and preachers we can find, to try what can be done towards counteracting vice by the *internal* application of *religious truth* alone.

Thoſe who have intereſted themſelves in promoting a parliamentary reform, are, on ſo many occaſions obliged to our author's *candour*, that to enumerate

enumerate every inſtance of it would be to tranſcribe almoſt his whole book; but in p. 18, it is particularly conſpicuous. "By an independent "parliament, in the language of the preſent "times," ſays he, "is to be underſtood a parliament in which the majority would oppoſe any "adminiſtration: now no arguments are neceſſary "to prove, that with ſuch a parliament no public "buſineſs whatever could be tranſacted, nor any "government ſubſiſt." Theſe words indeed are followed by the explanation which he puts into the mouths of the reformers, of what they profeſs to mean by an independent parliament; but he inſtantly denies that ſuch an aſſembly ever did exiſt on earth, or ever can, "until mankind ſhall be "melted down, and run in a new mould." The above therefore is evidently the light in which he means to place all who contend for a reform of parliament, except indeed thoſe few who having "more honeſty than ſenſe," (p. 3.) are capable of ſo abſurd a wiſh, as that of ſeeing an independent parliament in this country.

I ſhall not follow our author *word by word* where he in ſubſtance maintains, p. 19, 20. that a parliament, or numerous aſſembly, really independent, and acting "unawed, and uninfluenced, and "guided only by the dictates of their own judg-"ment and conſcience," never did nor ever can exiſt "in this or in any country;" but may I not deny the aſſertion, and endeavour to untwiſt the mighty cord of ſophiſtry by which he has attempted to hold it together? The truth of that part of his aſſertion, that an independent numerous aſſembly never *did* exiſt, he ſeems not very willing to be obliged to defend; and therefore in coming to his main point, he ſays, "as they are *now* "formed, in every numerous aſſembly there muſt "be ſome who have no judgment, and others who "have no conſcience, and ſome who have neither:

"take

" take away *ſelf intereſt*, and all theſe will have no " ſtar to ſteer by, but muſt ſail without a compaſs, " juſt as the gales of favour, or reſentment, of " popular abſurdity, or their own ſhall direct " them; *a miniſter therefore muſt be poſſeſſed of ſome* " *attractive influence*, to enable him to draw to- " gether theſe diſcordant particles, and unite them " in a firm and ſolid majority, without which he " can purſue no meaſures of public utility with " ſteadineſs or ſucceſs."

This, then, is the reſult of all our author's learning, reaſoning, and long experience! This is the beſt political leſſon he has to give us! This is one of the excellent concluſions to which he has been ſo ſolicitous to conduct us! Having myſelf ſome thoughts of getting into parliament, and clearly ſeeing the conveniency of this doctrine, it might not be wholly thrown away upon me, were it not for this unlucky circumſtance; that I cannot embrace it without inſtantly becoming an Atheiſt, which is a thing that requires rather more courage, and a good deal more faith, than I, unfortunately, am poſſeſſed of.

True indeed it is, as before obſerved, that that excellent citizen and moſt pious divine, Mr. Soame Jenyns, has done all he can to remove ſuch ſcruples from the minds of the timid, and to perſuade us that chriſtianity has nothing to do with " civil " government" and " national policy," being far too pure for the " practical obſervance" of thoſe, who are concerned in conducting them; but as I can ſee no medium between this doctrine and Atheiſm, nor have intellects for comprehending the doctrine itſelf, he will I dare ſay excuſe me for not being a convert to his opinion. On the contrary, I rather incline to infer from " the " divine leſſons, the perfect precepts, the beautiful

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"discourses, and the *consistent* conduct,"(21) of Him "who spake as never man spake, and lived as "never man lived,"(21) as well as from the wisdom which opened to Him the inmost recesses of the human heart, and his purpose of blessing all nations, and saving all men, that no truth was ever more indisputable than this, 'that the moral precepts of the gospel are equally a law to all men in all stations whatever, public as well as private.' Is the divine Jesus a dissembler, so prevaricating and so utterly inconsistent, as to say to the *private man*, 'Thou shalt not do evil that good may 'come,' and to the *public man*, 'Do evil because it 'is expedient!' And has the almighty Father, the alwise Creator of nature and of man, so ill contrived the laws of the former, and so ill adapted to them the minds of the latter, that men in public stations cannot possibly conform to those laws, as revealed by that divine Legislator! Ill indeed have the works of creation and redemption been both contrived and executed, if innocency and integrity must needs be departed from by the rulers of a nation! And unhappy indeed are the nations of the earth, if the best of their governments must needs be conducted by means of baseness, treachery and foul corruption!——When we reflect on the particular passage of our author now under consideration, the indignation and contempt that first possess the mind, gradually melt into a flow of melancholy sentiment, on the depravity to which learned vanity and a disposition for ridicule is subject to degenerate. With regard to the poor illiterate voter of a venal borough, or the necessitous wretch nurtured in idleness, beggary and vice, when we find *him* corrupt, we pity, we apologize, we almost forgive; but when, in a person of rank, learning and fortune, a man of genius and long ex-

(21) Jenyns's *Internal Evidence*. P. 35, 32.

perience,

perience, and a deep-read ſcholar in the holy ſcriptures, we behold, not a mere perſonal corruption, but the moſt abandoned and ſhameleſs panda-riſm to that foul and infamous vice, how ſhall we expreſs that conflict of emotions which muſt diſtreſs and agitate the ſoul! Turning with diſguſt and ſhame from an object ſo ſhocking, whither can we direct the eye of reflection, but inward on ourſelves, and upwards towards that Lord who one day ſhall demand of us, 'And how haſt thou employed the 'talent which I gave thee?' Better ſurely, that we have even wrapped it in a napkin, unprofitable and uſeleſs, than employed it in debaſing our fellow-creatures, and extending the dominion of tyranny, vice and wretchedneſs!

In farther conſidering the aſſertion, that a corrupt commerce is neceſſary between miniſters and members of parliament, which laſt, our author tells us, "will not ſerve their country for no-"thing," that they "get into parliament in "purſuit of power, honors, and preferments," (p. 23) and "are more neceſſary to be bought" by miniſters "in proportion to their power;" (p. 17) in farther conſidering, I ſay, this aſſertion ſo ſupported, as well as the author's concluſion from his own premiſes, that without "a firm and "ſolid majority" ſo ſecured, the miniſter "can "purſue no meaſures of public utility with ſteadi-"neſs or ſucceſs;"(p. 20) I would firſt ſeriouſly aſk this lively gentleman, if he have duly conſidered the nature, the extent, and conſequences of ſuch a doctrine? With regard to its nature, is not bribery the act of a corrupt heart? Is it not a mean and treacherous act, contrary to all laws human and divine?

Then, with regard to the extent of the evil, if miniſters and parliaments are to lay the foundations of their intercourſe in diſhoneſty and baſeneſs, what ſort of laws, what ſort of government, are

we to expect from them! Having in their very outset, boldly overleaped the eternal barrier between right and wrong, what security can we have, that in their future commerce the bounds of integrity will be observed by them, a disinterested attention to the public interest be their rule of conduct, or that the virtue and firmness of one of them shall guard that interest against any attempt of the other? Having mutually served themselves by the joint commission of one crime, can we expect them to stop there? Will a second temptation be more easily resisted than the first? a third than the second? Or will the privity of each to the depravity of the other, perhaps to his legal criminality, be no temptation to farther demands on his compliance? The history of mankind has established the contrary opinions; and shewn that when a person of either sex has once consented to one act of prostitution, rare indeed is it the last; but that so desperate a leap from the high ground of virtue, is generally followed by an accellerated descent into the depths of vice and infamy. And if this writer cannot see the ill effects of parliamentary corruption, in the very morals and habits of the higher ranks of people, and yet more palpably in a national debt when all is brought to account of near three hundred millions, as well as in the extreme contempt into which parliaments are fallen in the public estimation, we can pay but little compliment to his penetration.

Now, lastly, in regard to the consequences of this maxim, that parliamentary influence, which we shall still call by the uncourtly name of corruption, is necessary to the pursuit of "measures of "public utility with steadiness and success," it is to be feared they will be found nothing short of a total subversion of the state. If this be true, how despicable must appear those worthless emperics, who prescribe it as a necessary part of our political regi-

regimen! It may indeed be very ſafely pronounced, that this fundamental maxim of our author has in it as little knowledge, as patriotiſm; as little judgment, as honeſty; as little ſenſe, and as little truth, as it have of ſound morality, or chriſtian purity. "There are no words, in which "an argument can be ſtated, to eſtabliſh the ne- "ceſſity of a corrupt influence of the crown, over "a repreſentative aſſembly, in order that ſuch an "aſſembly may be directed to acts beneficial to their "conſtituents."(22) From the corrupt or the ſtupid, we may expect to hear this ſenſeleſs jargon, of the neceſſity of corruption; but we meet with no ſuch doctrine in Locke, whoſe authority as a teacher of the ſcience of civil government is not yet impaired, either by the rivalſhip of Dean Tucker, or the author of *Diſquiſitions on Several Subjects*; nor from the man of a comprehenſive mind or juſt reflection, from the real politician, the philoſopher, or the chriſtian, will our intellectual and moral feelings be ever inſulted with a dogma ſo wicked and ſo abſurd; leading at once to the deſtruction of virtue, liberty and national proſperity; and even to the certain ruin of the very ſyſtem itſelf, in ſupport of which it is pretended to be requiſite. For "the moment there is any "queſtion of the ſufficiency of the means of cor- "ruption," venal members of parliament ſeek "under various leaders, and various factions, "ſucceſſively to obtain poſſeſſion of the patronage "of corruption. The principle of influence is "then exactly reverſed in its operation, and cor- "ruption itſelf produces the diſſolution of every "government, founded upon corruption."(23) Had not this juſt obſervation been dictated by an

(22) Hartley's *Addreſs to the Corporation of Kingſtone upon Hull*, 21.

(23) Ib. 20.

actual experience of the ſtate of things in our own country, convincing the able author of the neceſſity of "reſtoring to the people an adequate and "efficient repreſentation in the Houſe of Com-"mons,"(24) meaning, as previouſly explained, "an equal repreſentation;"(25) and that "it is "no longer ſafe to be amuſed with palliatives;" (26) had not, I ſay, the foregoing obſervation been dictated by actual experience, it might have carried with it the leſs weight, and men incapable of juſt reaſoning might ſtill have continued in their ſcepticiſm on this propoſition: but if, after this appeal to experience, the obſervation wanted the ſtamp of ſome reſpectable name for its currency, we could refer our author to a better authority than his own, where, in page 24, he obſerves that, "upon the whole, under the ſame mode of "elections, and under parliaments not leſs in-"fluenced than the preſent, this nation has not "only ſubſiſted for many years, but arrived at the "ſummit of wealth, honor, power, and dominion, "and *might ſtill have preſerved them*, if the means "of that influence had been *ſufficient* to ſatisfy the "demands of ambition, and the hunger of fac-"tion." Here, then, is his own ſeal and ſignature, to an acknowledgment, extorted by fact and experience, fact and experience which ought to make the nation tremble, that his grand maxim in favour of parliamentary corruption, is in politics as fatal, as in morals it is pernicious. It is his own confeſſion, that corruption is a practice which exhauſts the means of ſupporting government, faſter than they can be acquired, even when a nation is "arrived at the ſummit of

(24) Hartley's *Addreſs to the Corporation of Kingſtone upon Hull*, 27.
(25) Ib. 25.
(26) Ib. 15.

"wealth,

" wealth, honour, power and dominion;" and while the miniſter of that nation has its purſe at command, by means of an " attractive influence," enabling him to ſecure " a firm and ſolid majority" in ſupport of his meaſures. (p. 20) We have a right to conſider the latter propoſition as part of his confeſſion, ſince, in the very ſentence before us, he refers us to " influenced" parliaments only, and to thoſe defects in repreſentation which are the cauſe of influence; and his whole endeavour, in the two preceding pages, has been to prove, that venality is neceſſarily a part of the character of our repreſentatives, that " parliaments have ever been " influenced," and that " a numerous aſſembly " uninfluenced is as much a creature of the imagi- " nation, as a griffin or a dragon."——What a panegyric all this on the ſyſtem of influence! no wonder, however, that its funds ſhould fail, even at a time when millions were intercepted ere they reached the Exchequer; for a perpetual drain far exceeding its ſupplies, would exhauſt the very ocean.(27) With the patronage of twenty *Americas*, and as many *Indoſtans*, it is eaſy to foreſee, that vain muſt be any hope of ever ſatisfying the

(27) Upon the debate in the Houſe of Commons upon Mr. Sawbridge's motion, for a committee to inquire into the ſtate of the repreſentation of the people in parliament, on the 10th of June laſt, it was aſſerted by one of the ſpeakers, that in one year of Lord North's adminiſtration, that miniſter ran the nation in debt *twenty-one* millions, when the actual receipt into the Exchequer was only *twelve* millions. Here, then, went nine millions of public property, at one ſtroke, into the hands of the conſcientious ſupporters of that wiſe and virtuous miniſter. How much was afterwards diſtributed in ſecret ſervice money, in rum contracts, in preſents to his Majeſty's ſavage Allies, &c. to ſupport the war that was to ſupport the miniſter, is not yet reduced to any certainty.

cravings

cravings of dæmons ſo inſatiable as ambition and faction. The increaſe of means, producing only an increaſe of appetite in a more increaſing ratio, the greater the means of corrupt influence, the leſs poſſible it would be, as Roman hiſtory teſtifies, to bribe ambition and faction to promote none but "meaſures of public utility;" for, ſo long as corruption ſhall be the ruling principle, the miniſter muſt and will have his neceſſary man, whether his price be a mite or a million, a penſion or a province. If, then, corruption be ſo naturally deſtructive of itſelf and of all things dependent on it, ſurely it is time, ere it complete our ruin, that we abandon a maxim of ſuch egregious folly, and reſort to principles of a contrary nature and tendency!

It is an obſervation of a modern writer, founded in an intimate acquaintance with our conſtitution, that it never intended our liberties to depend upon the *virtue* of men in public truſt, but in the *impoſſibility* of their being by ſuch men betrayed. In an equal and adequate repreſentation and annual elections, he juſtly places this impoſſibility. Seats in parliament could not then be bought and ſold; nor could our repreſentatives then ſell themſelves; for there would be none to buy them. Here, and here alone, is our complete ſecurity. A parliament may be intrinſically virtuous and independent. And many ſucceeding parliaments may be the ſame. But ſome time or other a parliament intrinſically venal and treacherous *may* poſſibly be choſen; and it is againſt ſuch an event, that the wiſdom of our ineſtimable conſtitution would provide, would we but have the ſenſe to permit it. And will our author pretend to tell us, as in effect he does in page 20, that the Engliſh conſtitution is erected on nonſenſe, and that the moment we ſhall have obtained the independent parliament it intends, all ſober and efficacious

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government muſt give place to anarchy and confuſion? We have not, however, as yet, found the depth of his wiſdom ſuch, as to give his principles ſo great a preference in our judgment over thoſe of the conſtitution, that we can yield him our aſſent to this extraordinary propoſition. May it not rather be conceived, that in parliaments choſen on the true principles of the conſtitution, the majority, not being ſubject to be miſled from the track of duty, by the deceitful current of ſelf-intereſt, would be very thankful to any man who ſhould ſuggeſt "meaſures of public utility," and to any miniſter who ſhould adopt them. Nor does it ſeem leſs reaſonable to imagine, that ſuch majority would give all poſſible ſtrength to the hands of wiſe and virtuous governors, and conſider even the voluntary retirement of a faithful miniſter with concern. In ſuch parliaments, competitors for the reins of government while a reſpectable miniſter was in office, would ever be looked on with eyes of jealouſy; and extraordinary ſuperiority in the principal requiſites to that character, muſt diſtinguiſh the member, whoſe pretenſions would meet with favour or encouragement. Nor would knowledge, induſtry and political ability alone ſuffice: to theſe muſt be added CHARACTER—that is, uncontaminated habits of life, virtuous connexions, approved integrity, a generous zeal for the ſervice of the public, and a ſacred regard on all occaſions to the principles of the conſtitution. Neither is it to be doubted, but that, from the nature of our government, the Houſe of Commons ſo reformed muſt ever abound with men equal to the taſk of government, with benefit and honour to their country: Then would it, indeed, be a ſchool of political wiſdom; a theatre on which virtue, genius, and magnanimity would delight to act; a council of legiſlation compoſed of the moſt intelligent, the moſt active, the beſt and greateſt men

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from all parts of the iſland. What a proſpect of ſolid benefits and ſubſtantial glory would ſuch an aſſembly preſent to our country! What an inviting field of emulation in all that is uſeful, great and good, would its annual renewal keep for ever open, to the future generations of Engliſhmen! Its natural effect upon ſociety would be, to bring patriotiſm into vogue, and virtue into faſhion. Thoſe therefore who think a reformation of morals is wanting, ought to be ſtrenuous advocates for a reformation of parliament.

Were a ſyſtem of corrupt influence thus become not only uſeleſs, but impracticable; what a happy change would be alſo made in the condition of a miniſter! Both temptation and means of ſacrificing all things to the avarice, ambition and factious deſigns of himſelf, of his kindred through all its degrees, and his connexions to the loweſt link of dependency, being wholly ſwept away, and nothing left but an honorable patronage to be diſpenſed according to merit, his ſtation would become ſomewhat leſs an object of deſire to ſordid and vicious minds, and more aſpired to by men of a generous and noble nature. In his employments too, there would be ſome difference. His time and ſpirits would no longer be exhauſted, nor his temper ruffled, with a fatiguing and vexatious warfare in parliament; nor would the inceſſant labours of ſecret intrigue, nor the difficulties and dangers of factious negociations, nor the toil of managing and ſilencing the unruly and inſatiable troops of corruption, nor the corroding anxieties and diſquiets of a guilty mind, added to the neceſſary cares of office, fruſtrate more than half the good that even the worſt miniſter, for his own ſake, would incline to do: On the contrary, the miniſter poſſeſſing inward ſerenity, conſciouſneſs of power to effect any thing great and beneficial, and abundance of leiſure for maturing and perfecting his plans; would be open to all the bene-

benevolent incitements of patriotiſm and chriſtianity to ſerve his fellow creatures; and the duties of his cloſet, as well as every office of the ſtateſman might be fulfilled and ſupported with equal dignity and ſatisfaction to himſelf, with equal benefit and glory to his country.

Let us now proceed to the next aſſertion of our author. It is this. "AN INDEPENDENT HOUSE OF "COMMONS IS NO PART OF THE ENGLISH CONSTITU-"TION——the excellency of which conſiſts in "being compoſed of three powers, mutually *depen-"dent* on each other; of theſe, if any one was to "become independent of the other two, it muſt en-"groſs the whole power to itſelf, and the form of "our government would be immediately changed." p. 21. After ſporting in every page with the underſtanding, as well as the moral ſenſe of his readers, we muſt not be ſurprized that our author ſhould at laſt attempt even to quibble us out of our conſtitution; but a quibble ſo puerile and contemptible as this before us, will ſcarcely ſerve the turn. And, in the cauſe which our author has undertaken, are wit, genius and learning brought down to ſuch humiliating condeſcentions as theſe! How degraded! how fallen! how beneath contempt they appear, when the miniſters of falſhood and vice! When we ſpeak of an *independent* Houſe of Commons, as a component part of a three-fold legiſlature, *not compellable* to obey the dictates of either, or both of the other branches, *nor under the baneful influence of corruption*, we convey a diſtinct idea and are perfectly underſtood, by all who are not determined to miſunderſtand or to pervert what we ſay. The argument of our author being therefore founded either in ignorance or perverſeneſs, his childiſh reaſoning falls to the ground. If the independence we have ſpoken of ſhould give way to open compulſion, the very *form* of our government would no longer ſubſiſt; and if it ſhould be barter'd away by the ſe-

cret venality of our repreſentatives, that outward form would be all we ſhould have left, while *the eſſence, the ſpirit and efficacy* would be no more.

But if our author muſt needs apply the epithet of *dependent*, to the Houſe of Commons, I will help him to an intelligible and conſtitutional meaning of his word, of which he ſeems at preſent to have no conception. I will tell him where that Houſe ought to be dependent; It ought to be dependent on the PEOPLE. Completely dependent; the very organ of their will. It cannot poſſibly be too much ſo; and the very moment that dependence is caſt off, it degenerates into ſomething utterly unknown to our conſtitution, and into a monſtrous power whoſe encroachments will aſſuredly be felt, either by the people or the crown. For an illuſtration of one part of this argument, I need not go many months back. The other part of the argument has too long and too uniformly been impreſſed upon the public mind to need any illuſtration. But I have a word more to ſay on this head bye and bye.

It needs no proof, that the moſt complete dependence of a Houſe of Commons on the people, muſt reſult from univerſal and equal repreſentation in annual parliaments. The demonſtration is contained in the very terms of the propoſition. 'O, 'but the thing is impracticable. The very leaders 'amongſt the reformers themſelves admit it. Mr. 'Fox treats the idea of univerſal ſuffrage as viſion-'ary and abſurd; and Mr. Pitt has been no leſs 'ſevere upon this chimerical project. The autho-'rity of Junius alſo, as well as of our author is 'againſt it.'——How far Mr. Fox, Mr. Pitt and Junius may reliſh the company into which their inconſiderate language on this ſubject has introduced them, I ſhall not pretend to ſurmiſe; nor ſhall I deſire any of them to change their opinion, until they ſhall ſee reaſon ſo to do. But I know that eloquence, although it may ſhake empires to their foun-

foundations, will never ſhake this conſtitutional principle. I know that heaven and earth ſhall paſs away, before one jot or one tittle of that truth ſhall fail, on which this principle ſtands. And if we are to talk of extravagance and abſurdity, is it not extravagant and abſurd to the higheſt degree, to admit, as we muſt, the practicability of taxing every man, woman and child, in forms and modes ſo various as even to mock enumeration, and not only annually, but every day in the year, and as often in a day as a taxt article is bought or conſumed; and in the ſame breath deny the practicability of any arrangement for giving each *man* only, if diſpoſed to uſe it, a ſingle vote once a year!—In our ludicrous author, empty and fallacious declamation againſt the univerſality of repreſentation is perfectly in character; but it is wholly unworthy of ſtateſmen and men of genius, who pretend to the government of kingdoms, and who ſeriouſly profeſs to patronize parliamentary reform; for they ought to be neither really, nor affectedly ignorant, on the queſtion. When certain advocates for reform ſhall have thought a little more, and a little more ſeriouſly on the ſubject, they will ſee the neceſſity of ceaſing to treat this univerſal RIGHT of the people with any marks of contempt; ſince it can anſwer no other end, than to beget a ſuſpicion, that they wiſh to unite with a reputation for reforming, the power of ſtopping the reform juſt at that point which may ſquare with their own private views and intereſts. Were they, as I hope for the honour of humanity they are not, reformers of this double-faced claſs, nothing could ſo well anſwer their purpoſe, as to make clear truth, a matter of doubt and uncertainty; ſimplicity, a myſtery; and that which is perfectly eaſy, be conſidered as difficult beyond practicability. Were it poſſible thus to involve the ſubject in confuſion and darkneſs, the *true nature*, and *full extent* of the principle of repreſentation,

might then be kept out of ſight; and ſo, a power reſerved to themſelves of giving it, or with-holding it, juſt in the preciſe degree that might ſuit with the ſhort-ſighted, the arbitrary politics of the day; and with the ariſtocratic pride and injuſtice of ſuch Borough-holders as, for the purpoſes of ſelf-ſupport, it might be convenient to compound with on the occaſion. And what could we call this, but bartering away the rights of the people for the purpoſes of ambition; and trafficking with the principles of the conſtitution, as with a merchandiſe in which they had a private property.

Upon this ſubject, it has been thought argumentative and decent, to hold theory and ſpeculation mightily cheap, and even to treat them with ridicule. But it is an artifice eaſily ſeen through. Are the men who treat theory and ſpeculation thus ſuperciliouſly to be taught, that, it is one thing to eſtabliſh a *principle*; and another to arrange a ſyſtem of *practice*. How will theſe men themſelves ever define or explain a *principle*, but by *theory* and *ſpeculation?* If it be the only poſſible mode, why ſo angry with thoſe who have uſed that mode? And if principles be the *criteria*, by which alone we can meaſure and eſtimate the utility and value of any practical arrangement, where is that modeſt ſtateſman who ſhall deſire a whole nation to adopt *his* arrangement, without any criterion by which to meaſure or eſtimate its rectitude or utility? Let ſuch men then, fairly and candidly hold forth in one hand, the true principle of repreſentation to its full extent, and, in the other hand, the degree of enjoyment which *they* recommend. If, in their ſober judgment, the enjoyment cannot ſafely be extended till commenſurate with the principle, if there be any real obſtacle in the way of completely reconciling practice with theory, let us hear their honeſt reaſons for ſuch opinion, let us have the evidence of the fact—reaſons and evidence that can be

be offered to the underſtandings of a free and enlightened people. Should thoſe reaſons and that evidence prove ſolid and ſatisfactory, their plan will meet with general applauſe, and they may ſet at nought the weak cavils of impracticable men. Perhaps it may then be found, that the maintainers of the principle of univerſal ſuffrage, are not of that deſcription. To do juſtice, however, to Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox, there was nothing that fell from them in the *laſt* debate on a parliamentary reform, which forbids us to hope, that, the promiſed plan of the former will appear in a conſtitutional ſhape, and be ſupported by the great abilities of both, without any *unneceſſary* ſeparation of practice from principle.

Having thus endeavoured to ſhew, that the united abilities of a Pitt, a Fox, and a Junius, can afford our author no aid whatever in his pious deſign to depreciate or to ridicule the doctrine of univerſal ſuffrage; and that their joint authority is lighter even than the duſt on the balance, when weighed againſt truth; it may be time to return to the point from whence we digreſſed, namely, the *means* of making a Houſe of Commons *moſt* dependent on the people; which appears to be by *univerſal and equal repreſentation in annual parliaments*. Had this been the *dependence* of a Houſe of Commons contended for by our author, I ſhould have deprecated its independence moſt fervently. A Houſe of Commons once independent of the people, is a dreadful power indeed! It is a combination of five hundred and fifty-eight tyrants. It is a houſe of five hundred and fifty-eight kings: And it requires no logic to prove, that five hundred and fifty-eight kings, with the national purſe at command, muſt be too ſtrong for one king without an independent ſhilling, although he have three hundred wealthy lords at his back.

Now

Now the ground of that dependence of the Houſe of Commons for which our author ſo virtuouſly, ſo ably, and ſo wittily contends, deſerves one moment of our attention. The commons of this realm, it ſeems, are to have five hundred and fifty-eight *repreſentatives*, as adviſers to the crown and guardians againſt its encroachments; and at the ſame time, many of theſe ſame *repreſentatives* are to be *ſelf-appointed*; many, nominated by the crown's *miniſter*; many, by particular *peers*; many, by other *borough-holders*; many, by the *Rajah of Tanjore*, *the Nabob of Oude*, *&c.* many, by his *Catholic*, or his *Chriſtian Majeſty*;(28) many, by *chriſtian clubs* ſuch as that at Shoreham; and, in ſhort, not a twentieth part of them by the people themſelves. Superadded to all this, a great proportion of the whole when brought together, are to be ſervants, holding lucrative offices and poſts of honor at the will of the crown, and military men dependent on that crown for their preferments; to ſay nothing of lawyers, ſince "they are ſeldom, "very ſeldom, bribed to injure their country." And then, if all this ſhall not be ſufficient, "a "miniſter muſt be poſſeſſed of ſome attractive in- "fluence," for effectually completing the dependence of the ſaid Houſe of Commons upon the ſaid crown. But how this curious ſyſtem renders the

(28) This indeed is only hypothetically ſtated, on the mere preſumption that when boroughs, like other ſtock or property, are put into the hands of *Brokers* to be carried to market, thoſe to whom they are moſt valuable and who can afford to give the beſt price, are moſt likely to be the purchaſers. And if it be pretty notorious, that the agents of Eaſtern Princes have found it worth their while to go to this market, it would be derogating greatly from the character of French policy, to allow that the cabinet of Verſailles was leſs quick ſighted to its political intereſts than thoſe ſemi-barbarians.

three

three powers of which, according to our author, our conſtitution is compoſed, "*mutually* dependent on each other,"(p. 21) is not quite ſo clear. If the dependence, however, for which he contends, be indeed proper, we ſeem to take a round-about way of coming at it. If our repreſentatives, after all, ought always to be thus gained by gifts to do the will of the crown, what need of repreſentatives at all? If the bleſſings of monarchy unmixed and unlimitted be our object, why endure ſo awkward, ſo troubleſome, and ſo expenſive a mode, when we might ſecure the enjoyment completely, by annihilating parliaments altogether?

And now, Gentle Reader, have we conducted Thee through the mazes of many an intricate page, until we are at length arrived at the maſter-ſtroke of our Goliah in wit and logic. "AN INDEPENDENT HOUSE OF COMMONS," ſay you?—What! would you have "a parliament in which the "members ſhall be always ready to ſupport the "meaſures of miniſters, when right, and to reſiſt "them when wrong, unawed, and uninfluenced, "and guided only by the dictates of their own "judgment and conſcience?"(p. 18)—Good God! are you mad? Know you what you aſk? Do you mean to murder the king, to annihilate the peers, and to eſtabliſh the worſt kind of democracy that ever exiſted? I muſt, therefore, now tell you, in the 21ſt page of my book, that "this an independent Houſe of Commons actually performed "in the laſt century," and that, "the ſame confuſion would *infallibly* be repeated, ſhould we "ever be ſo unfortunate as to ſee another?" And am not I, the author of *Thoughts on a Parliamentary Reform*, an oracle of truth, honeſty, and candour? a political teacher, the latchet of whoſe ſhoes, your Lockes, your Prices, and your Richmonds are not worthy to unlooſe?

Here, however, let us pauſe for a moment, to examine the truth of the fact, and to ſee how it applies

applies to the views of thoſe who are now zealous in the cauſe of parliamentary reform. We will firſt take by itſelf the direct, poſitive aſſertion, that the *infallible* conſequence of having an independent Houſe of Commons, would be, the murder of the king, the annihilation of the peerage, and the eſtabliſhment of a democracy of the worſt kind that ever exiſted. Having racked our invention, to diſcover any natural connection between ſuch a cauſe and ſuch an effect, but all to no purpoſe; we are obliged, to fix our attention on the period of hiſtory to which our author has refered us. There, ſeeking for the cauſes of the king's death and the change of government, we find that his own arbitrary diſpoſition and conduct, firſt gave riſe to the war between him and the parliament; and that his execution and the change of government, which in proceſs of time took place, were in truth the acts of a ſtanding army, making uſe of a parliamentary faction; but by no means the acts of an *independent* Houſe of Commons. So far from it, that the Houſe of Commons then in being, merely for having ſhewn a diſpoſition to accommodate with the king, had by that army been juſt *purged* of the greater part of its members; ſince only *ninety* (29) were permitted to remain, the moſt conſiderable of whom were military officers of note. But it had gradually fallen into a ſtate of unconſtitutional dependence on the prevailing faction of the day, and had undergone ſeveral changes of ſuch influence, in conſequence of having originally *thrown off its conſtitutional dependence on the people*; whereby alone, as already explained, a Houſe of Commons can be preſerved in a ſtate of freedom and independence on other powers. But very recently before its inſtrumentality in the death of the *king*, and even after it " had determined to

(29) Macaulay's *Hiſt.* IV. 400 and V. 4.

" proceed

" proceed againſt his life,"(30) it had ſhewn its temper with regard to the *people*, (whom, " under " God," it reſolved to be, " the origin of all juſt " power")(31) by rejecting with extreme violence, numerous petitions from the ſincere friends of liberty, and from even the army in general, demanding that *a diſſolution of the parliament* ſhould take place in April of the next year, and in the mean time an ordinance be made, for " the ſo- " vereign authority to be lodged in a repreſentative " aſſembly, compoſed of *four hundred* perſons, *bien- " nially* elected by counties, cities and boroughs, " *more equally proportioned with electors* than the pre- " ſent diſtribution; that *all the natives or denizens* " of England, being not perſons who received " alms, or ſervants receiving wages, ſhould have " the privilege of an elective voice." And to another petition, on a better model than any which had " yet been offered,"(32) inſiſting on *annual* elections, it ſhewed the ſame contempt. It audaciouſly ſtigmatized ſuch reforms " as deſtructive " to the being of parliament;"(33) and impriſonment, penalties, and even death were inflicted on thoſe who had thus expreſſed diſcontent, at " the " oligarchical form into which they had modelled " the government, and the undivided authority " they had aſſumed to themſelves."(34) In ſhort, the Houſe of Commons which was inſtrumental in thoſe extraordinary events, mentioned by our author, was an aſſembly moſt abhorrent to our conſtitution, and that to which a ſeptennial parliament under the corrupt influence of the crown, at the head of a ſtanding army, bears but too ſtrong, too alarming a reſemblance, both in frame and *diſpoſi-*

(30) Macaulay's *Hiſt.* V. 7.
(31) Ib. IV. 408.
(32) Ib. V. 7, 8.
(33) Ib. IV. 406.
(34) Ib. V. 6, 8.

tion. If the Houſe of Commons mentioned by our author ended with murdering his majeſty, the king; it began with murdering a higher majeſty, the majeſty of the people. It is remarkable, that the exorbitant power it poſſeſſed, had *the very ſame origin*, as the exorbitant power of a ſeptennial parliament; namely, *its own treaſon againſt its creators*, the people, whom, almoſt immediately after its own creation, it depoſed from their conſtitutional power, and in effect deprived of all *political* exiſtence, i. e. *politically* murdered. At the time of its election, the ſtatutes of Edward III. for *annual* parliaments were in force, without a ſhadow of a ground in law, or in reaſon, for the continuance of the ſame parliament beyond one ſeſſion; as, at the commencement of the firſt ſeptennial parliament, its duration by the ſtatute of William III. was limitted to three years. In the latter caſe, it is well known that the power of creating a Houſe of Commons, which is ſelf-evidently an incommunicable attribute of the commons, or people, was prepoſterouſly aſſumed by the very beings created; and employed *to make themſelves* a Houſe of Commons for four years longer than that ſtatute allowed, without any election or conſent of the people, or any other ſanction whatever, than the concurrence of the crown and the peers, in this infamous uſurpation. But in the former inſtance, the Houſe of Commons of 1640, went ſtill farther; for they prolonged their own power *for juſt ſo long a period as they ſhould chooſe to hold it*; by carrying the bill to prevent either diſſolution, or prorogation,(35) otherwiſe

(35) It had previouſly paſſed an act to guard againſt a longer intermiſſion of parliaments than three years at the moſt; but that act had not ſuperſeded the antient ſtatutes, for a parliament once a year or more often if need were; as was afterwards done by the triennial ſtatute of William III. which enacted that parliaments ſhould

otherwiſe than by act of parliament; or any adjournment, but of themſelves. In this fatal meaſure, the people, duped by their own confidence in their repreſentatives, and their dread of Charles's diſſolving that parliament without a redreſs of their grievances, as he had done the preceding one elected the ſame year, but too readily acquieſced; not perceiving that, by this very meaſure, the government was completely ſubverted;—that their elective power being deſtroyed, they were politically murdered; and, in ſhort, that from that moment the Houſe was become the aſſembly of kings and tyrants I have deſcribed.(36) Moreover, it was a Houſe of Commons originally choſen, *as at preſent*, under Borough monopoly, and a total diſregard to thoſe fundamental principles in repreſentation, *univerſality* and *equality*.(37)

Having

ſhould have three years continuance; thereby violating the conſtitution in its vital, and moſt fundamental principle, that of repreſentation.

(36) It is not the *abuſe* of arbitrary power, but the *poſſeſſion* of it, which conſtitutes a tyrant or deſpot. And although that Houſe long acted with great virtue, it was nevertheleſs a Houſe of tyrants from the moment it became independent of the people.

(37) The firſt Houſe of Commons elected in 1640, conſiſted of 507 members for England and Wales; ſo that probably the ſecond choſen that year, which was the ſame Houſe of Commons that in 1648 was inſtrumental in the king's death, had originally conſiſted of about the ſame number. In reſpect to the firſt of theſe parliaments, it appears that ſome boroughs had more than two members; as for inſtance, Wendover, three; Grampound, three; Tregony, three; Michell, four; Newport in Cornwall, three; Plimpton, three; Lyme Regis, three; Blechingley, three; Ryegate, three; Yarmouth, three; and Minehead, three; unleſs it be an error of the author I have conſulted; or that the

Having thus taken the liberty of bringing the author's modeſt aſſertion, and charitable inſinuation, to the touchſtone of fact, perhaps it may be thought that the bolt with which he thought to have ſmitten down the whole hoſt of reformers, has not only miſſed its mark, but given a pretty ſevere blow to the unconſtitutional ſyſtem of which he himſelf is the champion. But, he ſeems to have given not only his ſyſtem, but his character, a blow that will not very eaſily be recovered. The highly criminal imputation he endeavours to fix on the promoters of parliamentary reform, is not the leſs ſerious in its own nature, becauſe he is artful enough to adopt jocularity and facetiouſneſs, wit and levity, as the vehicles of his injuſtice and malignancy. Now, unleſs our author ſhall prove, that a Houſe of Commons made dependent on the people, by annual elections,—a Houſe whereof every member muſt have a populous diſtrict for his conſtituents,—and a houſe truly repreſenting, and choſen by, the whole nation in due proportion; is one and the ſame thing with, or perfectly equivalent to, a Houſe of Commons totally independent of the people, and holding uſurped power during its own good pleaſure,—a Houſe whereof a majority of the members was returned by decayed boroughs,—and a Houſe, in the election of which but a very ſmall part of the nation had any ſhare, and the groſſeſt partiality and diſproportion even amongſt them was notorious;—unleſs, I ſay, our author can prove, that there is no difference between two ſuch Houſes of Commons, and can give many other demonſtrations equally difficult, but no leſs neceſſary to the ſupport of his propoſitions, he muſt I fear ſtand convicted, of having either

additional members filled up vacancies after the firſt election; But as the parliament only met the 13th of April and was diſſolved the 5th of May, that is the leſs likely. See *Ruſhworth's Hiſt. Col.* P. 1105.

wilfully

wilfully or wantonly acted the part of a falſe witneſs; as well as of having, either deliberately or raſhly, endeavoured to fix on the advocates for a parliamentary reform according to the conſtitution, imputations as diſhonourable to their hearts as to their heads; affecting alike their allegiance to the crown, their loyalty to the conſtitution, and their piety to their country; by inſinuations, which, if the effect of raſhneſs, are extremely reprehenſible; but if the product of deliberation, are as baſe and as malicious, as ever inſtigated falſe accuſer.

What is wanting to render a modern Houſe of Commons as completely independent of the people and as dangerous to the conſtitution, as was that of the laſt century, by the mere difference between ſeptennial power and power not limitted to time, ſome may think is tolerably made up by places, penſions and all the *et cetera* of "attractive in-"fluence;" together with the great improvements made ſince thoſe times, in the ſyſtem of buying and managing boroughs, ſtill more decayed than a century ago. No wonder then, that a partially-elected, a ſeptennial and influenced parliament, coming ſo near in ſimilitude to the form and the murdering diſpoſition of the parliament referred to, ſhould have murdered an hundred thouſand of its own people and as many of their affectionate kindred, in ſupport of the helliſh principle, that *men ſhall obey laws without ſharing in the actual election of thoſe who make them*:(38) No wonder that a partially-elected, a ſeptennial and influenced parliament, ſhould have nearly ſunk the nation beyond redemption, by a debt that keeps it impoveriſhed in the

(38) It is ſomewhat remarkable, that the awful event, and the ſerious conſequences, of the American conteſt, ſhould have made ſo little impreſſion on the parliaments of Great Britain and Ireland, as not to prevent their immediately entering into a conteſt with the people of both countries, upon the very ſame principle, although a principle of abſurdity and deſpotiſm.

midſt

midſt of plenty and of peace: No wonder that ſuch a parliament, when American funds of influence were loſt and domeſtic ones nearly exhauſted, ſhould have turned to Indoſtan its corrupt and luſtful eye: No wonder that the crown ſhould have began to feel its encroachments: Nor would it be a wonder, ſhould even the conſtitution, which has braved the ſtorms of a thouſand years, fall a ſacrifice to its venality, its faction, its inordinate power and ambition.——How narrowly, how providentially, that conſtitution eſcaped but the other day, is known to us all. But how long it ſhall eſcape, unleſs the Houſe of Commons be once more brought into its conſtitutional dependence on the people, God only knows. Whenever a ſtrong combination of that Houſe's factions, ſeizing a favourable moment, ſhall be able to go but one ſtep farther than the laſt parliament went, adieu to the Britiſh conſtitution! adieu to Britiſh liberty for ever! Who ſhall preſume to ſay that, towards the period of a four years patronage of India, paramount to the crown, parliaments would not have been lengthened to one and twenty years, or rather made perpetual, as a meaſure to which all conſiderations would naturally have prompted its leaders! Who ſhall ſay where the towering, the daring ambition of thoſe leaders would have ſtopped! Who ſhall ſay, that, having taken their ſtation, as enemies at once victorious over prerogative and freedom, they would hereafter have found any medium between the death of traitors and deſpotic power!

If therefore, the Houſe of Commons which originally aſſembled in 1640, and was then a virtuous body, deſerve to be reprobated, firſt, for the unconſtitutional power it ſoon uſurped, and afterwards for its dependence on a faction, which uſed it as an inſtrument for deſtroying both king and conſtitution, certain I am, that every citizen faithful to his majeſty, loyal to the conſtitution, and true to his country, ought to dread the longer continu-

ance

ance of a partially-elected, a ſeptennial and influenced Houſe of Commons, notwithſtanding it has found ſuch an unreſerved advocate in our author; and to join with hand and heart all thoſe who contend for making that branch of the legiſlature what the conſtitution, truth, juſtice, and political wiſdom, all require it to be; namely, '*A repreſentative* '*of the whole People, proportionally appointed, and an-* '*nually elected.*'

Such a Houſe of Commons, all-potent to protect the people, would have no power to create a fourth eſtate, nor to invade any right of the crown: and ſhould the members of it, in their ſtate of complete dependence on the people, and in the ſhort period of their exiſtence,(39) be mad enough to make any ſuch attempt, are we not warranted, by recent example, to conclude, that the deteſtation of the public, would as far exceed that ſhewn to the laſt Houſe of Commons, as the whole nation exceeds the ſmall part who now enjoy the right of ſuffrage? They would be ſpurned to a man, from a people who, however tenacious of their own liberties, deſire not to change their conſtitution; much leſs,

(39) Although, for the ſake of argument, this ſuppoſition may be put, yet it muſt be confeſſed, that a wiſh on the part of the people to encroach on the rights of the crown, when *effectually defended againſt any abuſe of its power*, and none but beneficial effects ſhould be felt from the exerciſe of its authority, is infinitely leſs probable, than when the weight of the ſceptre, through the corruption of parliament, ſhall lie heavy on their loins. Nor has even a want of popularity in the crown, during a four-and-twenty year's reign, nor a variety of grievances, nor an immoderate increaſe of taxation during that period, inſpired the people with that wiſh. So far otherwiſe, that merely ſuch an attempt in others, wrought an inſtant oblivion of grievances, and rendered the crown the grand object of popular attachment.

to raiſe any demagogue above royalty. While in the very act of attempting to encroach upon the executive powers of the crown, was there any thing ſo much dreaded by the late Houſe of Commons, as *an end of their own power*, although they had held it for near four years? What did they leave untried to prevent their diſſolution? Did they not endeavour by a conduct of the greateſt violence, to bring the crown into ſuch a dilemma, that a diſſolution of parliament and a diſſolution of government ſhould have been the ſame thing? Did they not proceed againſt the king's miniſters, to as great extremities as votes, addreſſes, and threats would carry them? and as far *as they dare advance*, in oppoſition to the known will of an incenſed nation? —Does not the evidence of ſuch facts ſpeak more forcibly than any language?

Here then we may cloſe this inquiry, without having been able to diſcover, from *internal evidence*, any traces of *truth* or regard to the precepts of the *Chriſtian religion*, in "Thoughts on a Parliamentary "Reform;" the author of which we are, nevertheleſs, willing to leave in the unenvied poſſeſſion of all that reputation, which is to be derived from what appears to us to be a work of much wickedneſs and little wit; and without either ill-will to his perſon, or fear of his pen, we diſmiſs him with this charitable valediction; "Go, and ſin no "more."

POST-

POSTSCRIPT.

HAVING ſuggeſted that our author has not derived any advantage from Mr. Pitt, Mr. Fox or Junius, who, although in ſome degree they have countenanced a part of his creed, are on the ſubject of reform in general, his direct adverſaries, particularly the two former; I might perhaps incur a charge of partiality, were I to queſtion only what *they* have advanced in his favour, without adverting to the leſs doubtful ſupport which his doctrine has received from thoſe who entirely agree with him. Let us therefore hear his ableſt coadjutor, who, both by precept and example, has done more perhaps than any other man, our author himſelf not excepted, towards eſtabliſhing the doctrines we controvert. The reader knows I ſpeak of Lord North. He knows likewiſe, that I could not cite his Lordſhip at a moment more favourable to the cauſe of our author, than when his Lordſhip has juſt delivered his whole mind on the ſubject, in a long parliamentary oration, which has been extolled, as one of the moſt *argumentative* and able ſpeeches he ever made. To the ability of this ſpeech, we ſhall at preſent ſay nothing; but confine ourſelves merely to its argument. Now, as the end of argument, is to convince and perſuade,

by eſtabliſhing facts, juſt principles and ſound doctrines; and as poſitions are intrinſically the ſame, whether clad in coarſe and vulgar attire, or robed in flowing tiſſue of the niceſt and richeſt texture, we ſhall drop the gorgeous clothing of eloquence, in which his Lordſhip preſented his ſentiments to the Houſe, and take the liberty of contemplating only his mere poſitions in their proper form, when placed naked before the eye; in order that, not prejudice, but reaſon; not fancy, but judgment; may decide upon the true merits of this celebrated ſpeech.

His Lordſhip, then, to the beſt of my recollection, amongſt other poſitions, laid down the following: namely,

1ſt. That to renovate, or reſtore the conſtitution, would be to renovate or reſtore what it is our happineſs is gone to decay; ſince he argued, that the conſtitution in former times was much more arbitrary than at preſent; and that our anceſtors experienced far leſs popular freedom than we enjoy, with ten times more monarchy and twenty times more ariſtocracy.

2d. That freedom conſiſts in living under laws equally binding on the rich and the poor, the great and the ſmall.

3d. That the disfranchiſing act of 8th Henry VI, left the people at that period in a much worſe condition than they now are in; becauſe, forty ſhillings of their money being equivalent to thirty pounds of ours, the act excluded a far greater number of freeholders than at preſent.

4th. That the commons gained an addition to their freedom from Hen. VIII, who added very conſiderably to the elective body, by incorporating many boroughs.

5th. That the preſent inequalities and diſproportions of repreſentation are not even diſcernible, when we contemplate the fair form and admirable

beauty

beauty of our body politic; but are to be compared to mere warts on the human body, not in the ſmalleſt degree affecting its health; but if theſe were cut off, a mortification and death might enſue.

6th. That the late parliament was *not* diſſolved, becauſe the influence of the crown preponderated in the late Houſe of Commons; and that, if the preſent ſpeak the ſenſe of the people, the influence of the crown is gone, and there is no ground for reformation.

7th. That repreſentation was not eſſential to proſperity, ſince Mancheſter, Birmingham, Sheffield, Leeds, Halifax, &c. had grown opulent without it, while many favoured boroughs had gone to decay.

8th. That becauſe the great manufacturing towns had not prayed for a diſtinct repreſentation, and there were no petitions on the table from any of the People, therefore the Houſe ought not to agree to the motion then before them, 'for a com-'mittee to inquire into the ſtate of the repreſenta-'tion of the commons of Great Britain in parlia-'ment,' nor make any alterations.

Having thus ſtated ſome of his Lordſhip's poſitions, I ſhall content myſelf with ſome little comment thereon; not meaning to go into a full diſcuſſion of the ſeveral queſtions, but merely to ſuggeſt how far each of them appears in my judgment to be unfounded in reaſon. If in any reſpect the poſitions are ſtated erroneouſly, I ſhall very thankfully receive correction. Taking them in order, then,

1ſt. It does not appear to me, that his Lordſhip underſtands the conſtitution he took ſo much *hiſtorical* pains to unfold; and I muſt aſk, what became of all his hiſtorical reaſoning, as ſoon as in reply it had been obſerved by Mr. Pitt, that the *principle* of our conſtitution is *repreſentation?* upon

this ſingle flaſh of truth from the lips of youth, the hoary adverſary's whole chain of argument, or rather, his rope of ſand, inſtantly crumbled to duſt and rubbiſh. The reader's recollection of what has already been ſaid, in page 9 of the foregoing eſſay, will make it unneceſſary to follow his Lordſhip any farther on this head.

2d. Here, again, his Lordſhip ſhews himſelf not only utterly unacquainted with the conſtitution of England, but with the very elements of the ſcience of civil government; for his definition of freedom would ſuit with a ſtate of the moſt complete deſpotiſm, where the ſovereign ſhould be ſole legiſlator; whenever his laws ſhould bear equally on all ranks of his ſubjects, and be faithfully adminiſtered. Poſſibly his lordſhip may have defined what exiſts this moment in Pruſſia or in Auſtria; but he has not defined liberty. Thoſe who mean to be free, ought to know that laws and the adminiſtration of laws, be they ever ſo perfect, are but ſecondary objects. The primary object, is, the authority whereby laws are made; and to be free, is to live under laws to which we have given aſſent, either perſonally, or by repreſentatives in whoſe election we had a power of voting. In the words of the old maxims, the definitions run thus; "Laws, to "bind all, muſt be aſſented to by all;" and, "None ſhall be bound by laws, but thoſe who "aſſent." Thoſe who are denied the exerciſe of this right, may be protected, but they cannot be free.

3d. His Lordſhip's third poſition ſays no more, than that the ſtatute of diſfranchiſement was far more tyrannical and iniquitous, than is commonly imagined.

4th. When the borough of Saltaſh, during his lordſhip's adminiſtration, had become extinct, it was I preſume, with a view to increaſe the freedom of the people, that he prevailed on his Majeſty, as I have been well informed, to revive, that is, to renovate or reſtore the ſaid borough;

borough; and, as the moſt effectual means to that end, to give the new charter to his Lordſhip himſelf, together with a few of the dock-officers at Plymouth, and other ſelect perſons; Charters of incorporation granted by *Henry the eighth*, or adviſed by *Lord North*, I doubt not have been equally auſpicious to the cauſe of freedom. Indeed we are now fully ſenſible of our obligations, not only to Henry the eighth, but to all other princes whoſe borough charters have in fact placed in the hands of leſs than ten-thouſand perſons, the appointment of more than half the Britiſh Houſe of Commons. But whence a *royal* charter derived authority to ſay unto ſix perſons, 'You alone of the ſix-thouſand *Commons* of whom your town conſiſts, ſhall have repreſentatives in parliament,' I believe it will puzzle his Lordſhip to prove; unleſs any abſurd or tyrannical practice, merely from the circumſtance of being *an hiſtorical fact*, is to become the proof of a *conſtitutional principle*.(40)

5th. What a happineſs to poſſeſs a talent for *ſimiles* and *alluſions!* By this rare faculty, our *argumentative* orator proved, to the infinite ſatisfaction of the majority in a Britiſh Houſe of Commons, that the whole maſs of inequalities in the national repreſentation, like a mere wart on the human ſkin, are not even to be ſeen when any one contemplates the fair proportions and general beauty of the whole frame! nor do they in the ſmalleſt degree affect our political health! Nay, ſo perfectly inſignificant are all ſuch inequalities, that, in the ſober eye of reaſon, they amount to no more than, "Here, a "hair or two, too little; there, a hair or two, too

(40) The inhabitancy of Edinburgh is reckoned at *ſeventy thouſand* ſouls, whereof *thirty-nine* perſons elect thoſe who, by "a ſingular ſtretch of fancy," are called *the repreſentatives of that city*. Glaſgow has *forty-thouſand* ſouls; of whom, only *twenty-nine* are repreſented in parliament. See A circular Letter to the royal Burghs in Scotland.

"much."

"much." O, happy, happy, Britain, that haſt an experienced counſellor to ſatisfy thee ſo convincingly, that all thy grievances are imaginary! Be not thou, then, O my country, the deaf adder of ſcripture, when ſo charming a charmer ſweetly tunes his muſical voice, to charm away the very ſenſe of thy wrongs! Why, in the exceſs of thy ſpleen, and in the perverſeneſs of thy rugged nature, wilt thou make rude and peeviſh diſtinctions, between a houſeleſs borough and a populous county? Why fret, and chafe, and murmur, becauſe *two hundred and eighty* members, or a *majority* of thy repreſentative body, are elected by a leſs number of perſons, than in the city of Weſtminſter, are reſtricted to the choice of *two* only? Why object to thy whole community being liable to be bound by laws, to which poſſibly the aſſent of ſo ſmall a part only, as not to exceed the inhabitants of this ſingle city, ſhall have given their aſſent? Why imagine that this monopoly of repreſentation by a few, together with all its inequalities and diſproportions, can be productive of unequal laws, or partial legiſlative deciſions? or otherwiſe affect the health of thy body-politic? Or why ſuſpect, that a ſecond rejection; *by men ſo elected*, of a mere motion for only *inquiring into the ſtate* of repreſentation, as well as conſtant defeats of all attempts to ſhorten the duration of parliaments, lengthened by a traiterous act of *men ſo elected*, ſhould have been at all owing to thoſe inequalities and diſproportions of elective power amongſt thy people? Thy beſt phyſicians and thy moſt anxious friends have told thee very truly, that wherever the vital principle of election is wanting, that part of thy body is politically palſied and dead; that it is evident, from the preſent deficiencies, inequalities and diſproportions of the elective right, that from this dead palſy, not above a ſixth or ſeventh part of thy political body is free; and that nothing but reviving the dead parts,

by

by *reſtoring* this vital principle, can ever reſtore thy health: But the facetious, the wiſe, and witty NORTH—he whoſe counſels have been thy greateſt bleſſing, and whoſe purity of mind and purity of conduct have been equally conſpicuous; he who never flattered, who never deceived, who never betrayed thee; he who never waſted thy treaſure, nor ſpilt thy blood in the cauſe of iniquity, and againſt thy every intereſt; he, I ſay, aſſures thee that, at this inſtant, thou art all health and beauty; that this grievous diſeaſe of thine is all imaginary; and that even the niceſt obſerver cannot diſcover on thy frame, a blemiſh that is more than equivalent to, "Here, a hair or two, too little; there, a hair or "two, too much!"——Dropping however, all irony, I muſt once more take notice of his Lordſhip's extreme *ignorance of the conſtitution*; with regard to which, his figurative illuſtrations have been no leſs fallacious, than his hiſtorical deductions. Under a conſtitutional law for univerſal and equal repreſentation, when the elective diſtricts muſt unavoidably vary in their reſpective numbers, by differences of ten, or fifty, or a hundred inhabitants, according to circumſtances; when, amongſt the thouſands in each diſtrict, a few individuals not deſerving freedom, ſhould nevertheleſs enjoy the common rights of ſociety, becauſe not *legal* criminals; and when the free ſuffrages of uninfluenced electors, ſhould ſometimes place a few worthleſs and contemptible men amongſt the intelligent and reſpectable in the Houſe of Commons; then, indeed, would his Lordſhip's alluſions to warts, ſpecks and almoſt imperceptible inequalities of hair on the human body, be ſtrictly applicable to ſuch natural and trivial blemiſhes in the body politic, whoſe general health, vigour and beauty could ſuffer thence no ſenſible diminution. The neceſſity therefore of ſuch a law, is made evident by this very argument of its ableſt opponent. His Lordſhip's

objection

objection to *cutting off* even warts, as alluding to the oft-propoſed *amputation* of petty boroughs, is certainly juſt, and founded in conſtitutional truth. The equal and juſt ſpirit of the conſtitution ſays, 'Cut not off from freedom a ſingle citizen; but 'diffuſe liberty equally to all.' To melt down all monopolies and diſtinctions of ſuffrage, without touching thoſe parts of charters that are protective of private rights or productive of internal police, and then to portion out anew that ſuffrage, which is the birthright of us all, in equal ſhares and due proportions, would not diſfranchiſe a ſingle individual, but give freedom to millions. On the utter inſufficiency of a borough charter from the *crown* to confer an excluſive monopoly of repreſentation in parliament, to any particular perſons amongſt the *commons*, I have already touched. It is at once ſo ſelf-evidently unconſtitutional, iniquitous, and abſurd; that 'tis a doctrine not to be reaſoned upon, but to be ſpurned with contempt and indignation.

6th. As the diſplay of a quibbling dexterity in the war of words, there is too little ingenuity in the party argument contained in his Lordſhip's ſixth poſition, to be worth our notice, was it not for the concluſion againſt reform which he has drawn therefrom. If the late Houſe of Commons was *not* diſſolved becauſe the influence of the crown preponderated in that houſe, it certainly *was* diſſolved for one of theſe two reaſons; either that a dangerous influence of ſome kind *did* preponderate, or that the influence of the PEOPLE did *not* preponderate. His Lordſhip is welcome to chooſe his alternative.

Again: Although the preſent Houſe of Commons may ſpeak the ſenſe of *its electors*, on the ſingle point of execrating the coalition; it by no means follows, that it ſpeaks their ſenſe on other queſtions. Nor is it poſſible, that it can at all ſpeak *repreſentatively* the ſenſe of *thoſe who have not made it their repreſentative*; who are by far the greateſt part of this nation.

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It may indeed happen to coincide with them in opinion, on this topic or on that; and ſo may the parliament of Ireland or of Paris, the States of Holland or the Congreſs of America; but he who calls this *repreſentation*, or ſpeaking *the ſenſe of the people* according to conſtitutional intendment, knows as little of the conſtitution as he does of the third heavens.

Beſides; the preſent Houſe of Commons ſtanding upon the ſame monſtrous inequalities, the ſame iniquitous diſproportions, the ſame pernicious monopolies of ſuffrage, and inordinate duration of power, as the laſt ſtood on, how can we have a ſhadow of ſecurity, that, before its diſſolution, it ſhall not become as verſatile and infamous as the late parliament; which began its career, with ſupporting the worſt of wars and the worſt of miniſters, —which proceeded in the ſame courſe, until, through a ſudden dread of damning proofs being held forth to the public, it ſubſcribed to the general opinion of mankind, recording its own infamy in that memorable vote, "That the influence of the crown "has increaſed, is increaſing, and ought to be "diminiſhed," the plain Engliſh of which is, 'That the corruption of this houſe has increaſed, 'is increaſing, and ought to be diminiſhed:"(41)— which alſo ſoon after pulled down the whole miniſtry, and ſupported a new one upon oppoſite principles:—which then put on the grimace of reform, but took care to get rid of the only motion that led to any thing deſerving the name:—but which, ſoon tired of even the ſhew of virtue, quickly gave itſelf wholly up to the intrigues of men, who had no ſcruples to ſacrifice their conſiſtency, their characters, and their country, to private revenge and the

(41) This ſelf-condemning vote has been attributed to a threat of Mr. Dunning, to expoſe by name a great number of members for acts of venality if they ſhould oppoſe it.

luſt of power :—and which cloſed its career, with an intemperate and violent ſupport of the very miniſter it had before ſo juſtly degraded, and the reſt of a profligate and deſperate faction, in their attempts to enſlave at once both king and people.

7th. The places mentioned in this poſition, undoubtedly have, by the force of ſituation and other natural advantages, thriven exceedingly under the diſadvantage of wanting a diſtinct repreſentation in parliament; nor is it even improbable, but that *under a capricious, arbitrary, and ridiculous ſyſtem of repreſentation productive of infinite election evils*, the circumſtance of being free from thoſe evils, may in ſome degree have contributed towards that proſperity; notwithſtanding Briſtol and Liverpool, London and Weſtminſter, as examples of another kind, might not readily conſent to part with their elective rights. A candid acknowledgment of any real objection, can never hurt an honeſt ſyſtem; but the objection to which I here allow its full weight, under a plan for univerſal and equal repreſentation in annual parliaments, according to the conſtitution, would ceaſe to be an objection; becauſe ſuch a plan, doing away election evils, would remove every objection of Mancheſter, Birmingham, and the other manufacturing towns, to a diſtinct and local choice of repreſentatives. To ſay that thoſe towns would derive no benefit from ſuch a repreſentation, would be to talk againſt the common ſenſe of mankind, and to libel the conſtitution of England; whoſe peculiar glory it is, to preſcribe a full repreſentation of its people in the legiſlature. Even ſuppoſing repreſentation were an evil, it ought either to be held back from thoſe places which ſuffer from it, or impoſed on thoſe which thrive by its abſence, at the expence of other parts of the community. This at leaſt would be giving us an *equal* law, the living under which is his Lordſhip's definition of freedom.

8th.

8th. In laying down this poſition, his Lordſhip aſks, 'Do the people call for reform? Is there a 'ſingle petition for it *on the table?* Read me in par-'ticular the petitions of Mancheſter, Birmingham, '&c.' When, on a former occaſion, there were ſo many petitions, that, for want of room, they were piled on the floor, all the reſpect the Member for Banbury then thought fit to ſhew them, was to introduce in his ſpeech a ſilly jeſt, on the numerous petitions "under the table." It is however a new doctrine, and as curious as it is new, that where there are no petitions, there is to be no legiſlative interference. And it is a ſtill more extraordinary idea, that, unleſs a petition be ſigned by a majority of the people, its allegations ſhall not be conſidered as true, nor its prayer be even taken into conſideration; much leſs, complied with. It is now an argument with his Lordſhip, that there are *no* petitions; it was on the former occaſion his argument, that they were only ſigned by a *minority*; and it may be remembered in particular, that he even counted the ſignatures to the petition of Somerſet. This mighty man of argument never told us, that I remember, how many millions had petitioned for the coalition India bill. And may we not aſk where are now the petitions from the public in general, or from the tea-dealers in particular, to protect the fair trader, improve the revenue, and benefit the ſtate, by a ſuppreſſion of ſmuggling? The notoriety of the abuſe, the certainty of the iniquity, and the magnitude of the evil, have, *on this occaſion*, been thought ſufficient grounds for the application of a legiſlative remedy. Nor has any one member, not even the Member for Banbury, thought it either parliamentary or *decent* to maintain, that the abuſe, the iniquity, and the evil, ought ſtill to prey upon the public revenue and the public morals, until ſo far magnified beyond endurance, as to extort from the people petitions for redreſs; nay that that re-

dreſs ought not then to be granted; no, nor even the complaint *inquired* into, unleſs a majority of the nation ſhould have become petitioners. I believe, on the contrary, it has been thought one of the great merits of this proceeding, that it made complaints and petitions unneceſſary, by meeting the public wiſh, and providing for the public good, unaſked. But who ever doubted, that it belonged to parliament itſelf, as an indiſpenſible duty, that it was in the very eſſence of its character, as a repreſentative *guardian* of the public, to be vigilant and induſtrious in the *diſcovery* of all pernicious irregularities; to inſtitute *ſpontaneous* inquiry into all ſerious abuſes coming to its knowledge; to *anticipate* all application for redreſs; and to promote the welfare and the contentment of the people, by arreſting corruption and abuſe in their *beginnings*, and nipping injuſtice and evil in the *bud?*—If this be the proper character and duty of a Houſe of Commons, what ſhall we think of the fate which has uniformly attended all our petitions and all our attempts for redreſs of thoſe two notorious, enormous, and intolerable grievances, partial repreſentation, and unconſtitutional duration of parliaments? And when we recollect that, in addition to its legiſlative authority, that Houſe, in matters of election, claims alſo the powers of a ſupreme and final judicature, how ſhall we account for its refuſing even to *inquire* into the ſubject of our complaint? It is no part of the boaſted law and conſtitution of England, that the adminiſtration of juſtice ſhall be optional; and that our judges ſhall preſume to have a choice in cauſes, to hear, or not to hear, at their pleaſure. Much leſs, is it part of that conſtitution, that the judges in a ſupreme and final court of judicature, on a queſtion immediately intereſting to themſelves, ſhall firſt cloſe againſt us all inferior courts, and then diſmiſs our cauſe unheard, as regularly as we attempt to bring it before them. If the

the Houſe of Commons, in matters of election, be indeed a judicature, it muſt be open to our ſuit; it muſt receive our evidence; it muſt render juſtice. It has no alternative. Good God! ſhall men ſit in the ſacred ſeats of judgment, and dare to deny juſtice! It were not only the conſummation of tyranny to man, but a mockery of God and his laws, of the utmoſt impiety!

Such, then, are the reflections which aroſe in my mind, on hearing the ſpeech of Lord North. Nor did I at the moment notice a ſingle poſition, but what, when taken out of his Lordſhip's hands and placed in a juſt point of view, would have made ſtrongly in favour of parliamentary reform. The difference of opinion on this extraordinary oration is certainly very wide indeed; ſome admiring it as a *chef d'œuvre* of eloquence and ability, and, in reſpect to the conſtitution, learned and argumentative in a high degree; while others conſidered it, as no better than a mere quibbling and ſophiſtical harangue of an artful pettyfogger, and, with regard to the conſtitution, that it betrayed either the ignorance of a Hottentot, or, what is as little commendable, an abuſe of knowledge and a perverſion of truth. For my own part, I only lament that it has not been in my power to do more ample juſtice to this ſpeech, which I ſhould be happy to ſee in print, and bound up with "*Thoughts* "*on a Parliamentary Reform*;" in order that the writer and the orator might mutually reflect light and reputation upon each other; and that the public might ſee in a ſmall compaſs, all that their wit, genius and learning have to advance againſt equalizing repreſentation and ſhortening the duration of parliaments.

When his Lordſhip or his friend ſhall have invalidated the four ſhort propoſitions contained in the ſubjoined *Declaration*, or refuted the arguments uſed in the notes upon the ſame, it will be time enough to meet them again in the field of controverſy. Till then, I bid them adieu!

" DECLA-

" DECLARATION OF RIGHTS,

" Without which no Engliſhman can be a free
" Man, nor the Engliſh Nation a free
" People.

" I. THE right of making Laws for this realm
" is, by the conſtitution, lodged in the
" hands of King, Lords of Parliament, and the
" Repreſentatives of the Commons.

" II. Every Engliſhman (infants, inſane perſons,
" and criminals excepted) is, of common right,
" and by the laws of God, a *free* man, and intitled
" to the full enjoyment of political liberty.

" III. It is eſſential to an Engliſhman's political
" liberty that he have *an actual ſhare*, either in le-
" giſlation itſelf, or in the electing of thoſe who
" are to frame the laws; which, although they
" ought to protect him in the full enjoyment of thoſe
" abſolute rights, that are veſted in him by the im-
" mutable laws of nature, may yet be fabricated to
" the deſtruction of his perſon, his property, his
" religious freedom, family and fame.

" IV. It is a natural right of the Commons of
" England, and required by the principles of the
" conſtitution, that they elect a *new* Houſe of Par-
" liament once at leaſt in *every* year: Becauſe,
" whenever a parliament continues in being for a
" longer term than *one ſeſſion*, then thouſands who,
" ſince it was choſen, have attained to man's eſtate,
" and are therefore entitled to enter into immediate
" Poſſeſſion of that elective power which is their

" beſt

" beſt and moſt ſacred inheritance, are in that caſe " unjuſtly *denied their right*, and *excluded from* the " enjoyment of political liberty."

Note 1ſt. The rich and the poor being of *the ſame ſpecies*, are under the ſame laws of nature, and being alike capable of benefit or injury from their legiſlators, they neceſſarily have, in the election of thoſe legiſlators, *the ſame rights*. But the rich, in defence of their liberty and property, have every advantage which wealth, knowledge, and the purchaſed ſervices of others can afford them; while the poor, deſtitute of all theſe, have no ſecurity but in *the purity of legiſlation*, nor any means of ſelf-defence, but in *retaining their ſhare of the elective power*.

The poor then, have an *equal right*, but *more need*, to elect repreſentatives than the rich. He that is free, poſſeſſes that which is more to be valued than riches; but, robbed of liberty, he is poor indeed!

Note 2d. All who talk of a *virtual* repreſentation, agree that it is not a *real* repreſentation; conſequently, it is no repreſentation at all. All *electors* ſhare in a *real* repreſentation; becauſe the choſen perſon repreſents the *body* of which they are ſeverally the *members*. Why does an attorney at law repreſent his client?—Becauſe choſen ſo to do *by* that client. Why does a parliamentary attorney repreſent any particular community or body of electors?—Becauſe choſen ſo to do *by* that community or body of electors. But beyond the limits of *election*, there can be no *repreſentation* whatever. And where there is no repreſentation, there is no conſtitutional power of taxation or legiſlation. Who ever heard that the attorney of *John* ſhall diſpoſe of the property of *Thomas*, becauſe John and Thomas happen to reſide in the ſame town or county? Or who now admits, that men choſen by *Henry* and *Edward* only, ſhall have power over the life and liberty of *William* and *George?*

Note 3d. Neither is the member choſen by *one* community, the repreſentative of *any other* community; much leſs of *all other* communities in the kingdom.

The

The member choſen to repreſent Yorkſhire is undoubtedly, *with others*, a *joint-legiſlator* for the whole Kingdom; but to call him who is choſen by Yorkſhire *alone*, the *repreſentative* of *all* England, is to trifle with words, and to confound ideas which are totally diſtinct. If, on occaſion of a joint concern, three partners, John, Thomas, and Samuel, appoint each his ſeparate attorney, to be paid out of his ſeparate purſe, to follow his ſeparate inſtructions, and to take care of his ſeparate intereſt, at the ſame time that he was required, *in conjunction with the others*, to promote the joint intereſt of the whole partnerſhip, each perſon ſo appointed is ſtill the attorney of *his own principal*, and not the attorney of *the partnerſhip*. As no one could be the attorney *of* the partnerſhip without being choſen *by* the partnerſhip; ſo no member of parliament can be the attorney or repreſentative *of* the whole kingdom until choſen *by* the whole kingdom.

Note 4th. Thoſe Engliſhmen who have *no* votes for electing repreſentatives, are *not* free men, as the rights of nature and the principles of our conſtitution require; but are *enſlaved* to the repreſentatives of thoſe who have votes: For, to be enſlaved, is to have *no will of our own* in the choice of law-makers, but to be governed by legiſlators whom *other men have ſet over us*. This was the unhappy condition of the antient *villani* or villains; who being accounted *not free*, had no votes for electing repreſentatives. But there being now, *none who in law are accounted not free*, there are conſequently none to whom we can pretend to deny the ſacred right of election.

Note 5th. But by the operation of *one* unconſtitutional and wicked law (the diſfranchiſing ſtatute of 8 Hen. VI.) about *ſix-ſeventhſ* of the Engliſh nation are at this day totally debarred of their birthright of voting for members of parliament, which ſacred inheritance and right of nature was enjoyed by their free anceſtors, until the enacting of that ſtatute: and by the operation of *another* iniquitous law (the ſeptennial act) the remaining *ſeventh part* are alſo debarred ſix years in every ſeven!

As, by the IVth article, it is demonſtrated, that no parliament could poſſeſs any juſt authority to prolong its own exiſtence beyond one ſeſſion; ſo it is alſo evident that

that any ſubmiſſion on the part of the people to the Injuſtice of the *ſeptennial* or *triennial* ſtatutes, could not weaken their natural right to a ſeſſional choice of repreſentatives.

Note 6th. The people's right to parliaments of *one ſeſſion* was uniformly aſſerted in the written law of the land from the remoteſt antiquity down to the reign of *Charles the firſt*. Not a ſingle diſadvantage to liberty from the ſhortneſs of ſeſſional parliaments was ever recorded in hiſtory. But the evils of long parliaments—are they not written in tears and in blood! and have ſuch parliaments left us aught of Liberty but the name!

Note 7th. With the poor exception then, of *one* year of freedom in every ſeven, and in favour of only *one ſeventh part* of the nation, it is *demonſtrated*, that the people of England are conſtantly *taxed without being repreſented*, and *compelled to obey laws to which they never gave aſſent*.

Are not theſe the very definitions of ſlavery! and are not Engliſhmen thus degraded to a level with the very cattle in the field and the ſheep in the fold, which are a property to thoſe who rule over them, and have no voice to ſay, Why are we bought and ſold? Why are we yoked and laden with heavy burthens? Why are we fleeced and led to the ſlaughter?

THE END.

☞ To note 4 in the fourth page, I beg leave to make the following addition.

Although I allow that the anſwerer has completely expoſed and refuted the ſophiſtry employed by the author of the *Diſquiſitions*, againſt *the natural equality of men*, as beings of one ſpecies, owing no ſubordination one to another but what is founded in aſſent,—meaning, a voluntary delegation of public power, in truſt, and limitted in its exerciſe to the public good;(42) yet, as a name of high authority, is ſometimes of more weight than a demonſtration, I would recommend to him, ſhould he ever publiſh another edition of the anſwer, to avail himſelf of the high authority, to which I have been indebted for ſo many obligations in the foregoing pages, meaning the authority of *Soame Jenyns, Eſq*; The anonymous author of the Diſquiſitions, in p. 121, ſays, "Firſt then; that all men are born equal; by which "propoſition, if it is only meant, that all men are "equally born, that is, that one man is as much born "as another, I ſhall not diſpute its truth: but *in every "other ſenſe* it is *entirely falſe*; for," &c.——Now, what ſays Mr. *Jenyns?* In his Letter, on "Political "Evils," ſpeaking of "Government," he informs

(42) With regard to perſons born and growing to manhood under a free form of government, a tacit acquieſcence is exactly equivalent to an original voluntary delegation, being, no leſs truly, an aſſent: But very different is every kind or degree of forced ſubmiſſion to unjuſt or arbitrary government, merely from a want of power or courage to reſiſt, of wiſdom or virtue to reform it. It is, however, the evident duty of every moral man, and of every chriſtian, having a capacity for diſcerning how far the government of his country operates by compulſion, to the excluſion of aſſent, or, in other words, by iniquity, in contempt of the laws of God, to uſe all the virtuous means in his power, to correct ſuch an evil.

us,

us, that " Its origin alſo ariſes from the ſame impure " ſource of human imperfection; that is, men being " neither wiſe nor honeſt enough, to purſue their " common or mutual intereſts without compulſion, are " obliged to ſubmit to ſome, in order to ſecure their " lives and properties from the depredations of all: but " though this neceſſity drives them into ſome kind of " government, yet *it can never decide* WHO *ſhall govern*, " becauſe ALL MEN BEING BY NATURE " EQUAL, every one has *an equal right to this ſuperi-* " *ority*;"

And again: " In abſolute monarchies, for inſtance, " great violence muſt be exerciſed to keep men, BY " NATURE EQUAL, in ſo *unnatural* a ſubjection; " this muſt produce plots, rebellions, civil wars, and " maſſacres; and theſe muſt require more violence to " repreſs them; but this violence cannot be uſed with- " out much corruption:"(43)

Having taken theſe extracts from a *fifth* edition of Mr. *Jenyns's* work, we may have the greater confidence in his having well conſidered the queſtion. His authority, however, added to the authority of truth, muſt inſtantly weigh down the very childiſh, and not very honeſt ſophiſtry, of the Diſquiſition in queſtion. But, were it, indeed, even true, as ſome have idly reported, and I believe the Bookſeller amongſt the reſt, that *the Diſquiſition* and *the Letter on Political Evil*, are productions of the very ſame pen; who ſo proper to anſwer SOAME JENYNS, ESQ. when fallacious and ridiculous; as the ſame SOAME JENYNS, ESQ. ſpeaking truth and good ſenſe?

(43) *Miſcellaneous Pieces in Verſe and Proſe, by* SOAME JENYNS, ESQ. publiſhed for Dodſley, 1770. P. 325 and 329.

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